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F. J. Moran
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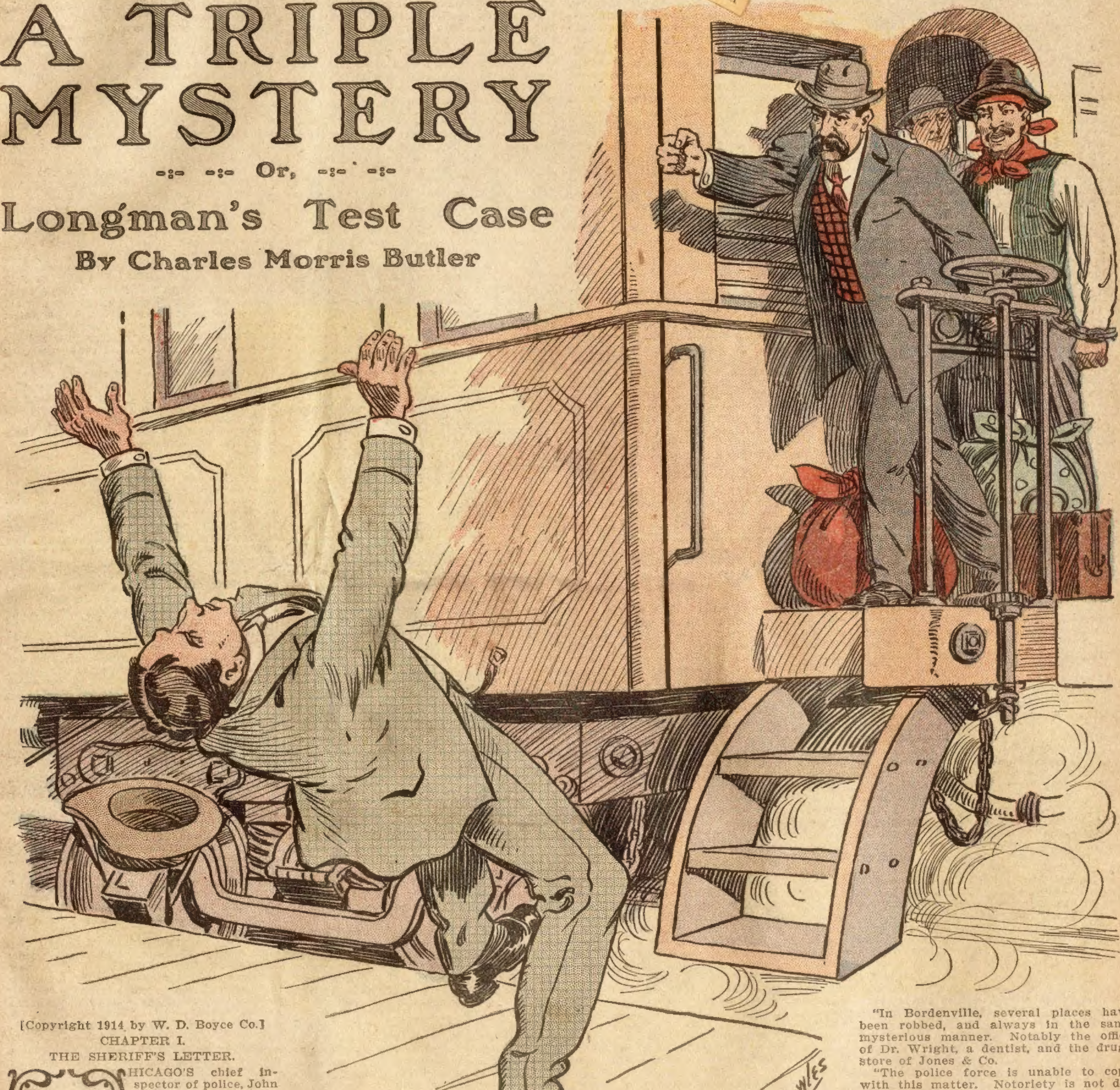
A TRIPLE MYSTERY

Or,

Longman's Test Case

By Charles Morris Butler



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CHAPTER I.

THE SHERIFF'S LETTER.

CHICAGO'S chief inspector of police, John D. Shea, at ten o'clock in the morning of an August day, had just finished perusing the various reports submitted to him from the different lieutenants from the various precincts under his charge. While pondering over the many complex problems presented to him for solution, he settled back in his revolving chair for a quiet smoke and skim of the columns of his favorite newspaper.

He was interrupted in his reverie by the arrival of a postman with a registered letter addressed to him personally. It was postmarked "Bordenville," and marked "private." Wondering, he opened the missive and read:

Bordenville, Ill., August 1.

"Inspector John D. Shea,

"Dear Sir:

"Pardon my presumption in writing you in this manner, but knowing your keen interest in all matters criminal, I desire to enlist your sympathies toward ferreting out the perpetrators of several mysterious robberies which have taken place in this (Borden) County in the last few days.

"A few days ago the store of W. T. Haynes of Lewiston was entered and robbed of all the available notes and cash usually kept in a safe for security. No violence was used in opening the safe or gaining entrance to the store. Nothing else was disturbed. Haynes is the only one who knows the combination of the safe, so he says, but I presume any cracksman could open it without the use of dynamite.

"In Vaughnton, the general store and postoffice of Miller Bros. was also robbed. But here a peculiar problem presents itself. While all the firm's money was taken, not a dollar's worth of stamps, money orders, or Government money was taken. The postoffice safe was left untouched. Owing to this the postoffice department will have nothing to do with the case.

"In Bordenville, several places have been robbed, and always in the same mysterious manner. Notably the office of Dr. Wright, a dentist, and the drugstore of Jones & Co.

"The police force is unable to cope with this matter. Notoriety is not desirable. So far we have been able to keep the news out of the papers. We do not desire to alarm the residents. Mr. Miller suggested to me I write to you, suggesting you send us a man from Chicago to look into the matter. He has donated quite a sum to defray expenses, for personal reasons. I am up for reelection, and unless I can make good and capture the criminals I surely will be defeated. I am willing to guarantee expenses if you can send me down a shrewd, secretive man who, though he fails, can keep his mouth shut.

"Thanking you in advance for any favors shown, I am,

"Yours truly,
"T. C. WHITCOMB,
"Sheriff of Borden County.

"P. S.—Inclosed find $50, advance fees for railroad fare, etc.

"T. C. W.",

"Jackson," said the inspector, turning to his stenographer, "answer this letter and say that I will be pleased to detail a man upon the case at once. That I will expect the county to pay the man his salary and expenses while on the case, and that the man must be given full power to act, of course subject to recall any time the sheriff desires the matter to end."

He then touched a button, and when a young lad entered his office, said: "Alex, notify Mr. Jenks that I desire to see him."

A ministerial-looking man entered the room almost immediately, noiselessly taking a chair near the inspector.

"Well?" queried Mr. Jenks.

The inspector handed him the sheriff's letter. "It's a wonder to me these people don't send for a private detective. What do they want to bother us for?"

"You should feel flattered, chief," curtly responded Mr. Jenks, as he read the letter. "Evidently the down-State people recognize your interest in police matters as well as ability, even if the politicians in Chicago try to overlook the fact."

"True," said the chief, "and for that reason I want to help them. What do you make out of the case?"

"I presume it is an organized gang of yeggmen who have stumbled upon fertile fields. Quite an epidemic of crime. The robberies do look mysterious, though, as Whitcomb says. I don't wonder they baffle his local police."

"I want you to help me formulate some plan of procedure for the man I shall place upon the case. First look on the map and see if Bordenville, Lewiston, and Vaughnton are connected by rail."

"The towns are connected in a way," said Mr. Jenks, examining the map. "Illinois Valley R. R. Bordenville, 2,500; Lewiston, 2,100; Vaughnton, 1,700. Quite a bunch of little towns in Borden County."

"From first glance," mused the chief, "it looks like a common series of robberies—perhaps a gang following in the wake of a cheap circus, carnival, or tent show of some kind. Perhaps part of a show gang themselves. Only for one thing—one thing," he muttered. "No violence used in entering the stores; no violence in opening safes; no destruction of property or looting. That's the mysterious aspect of the case. I wonder if I am going to have the privilege of making a new entry in my notebook, 'Another unexplained series of crimes?' It's about due."

"For once in our lives," said Mr. Jenks, very affably, "suppose we call in the man we intend to send out on the case and refrain from giving him any 'pointers.' Let him work out his own salvation, as it were. Let him fail, if necessary. It may take some of the conceit out of him. These special cases have a tendency to create swelled heads, and some of our plain clothes men need to have a brick hit them once in a while to let them know that they are not the whole cheese."

"So be it," said the inspector, smiling. "I know by the way you speak that you have some particular man and reason in view. Whom do you suggest for the job?"

"A new man," said Mr. Jenks, readily. "You know that young reporter, Longman, whom Augustus Barlow recommended for the force? Longman doesn't know it yet, but Barlow is paying his salary until we can give the man a chance to make good on his own account. This would be a fine chance for him to demonstrate his alleged ability. I don't quite like the way in which he is forcing himself into the 'force,' but Barlow is too big a man to antagonize in the matter. We will give him a chance—to fall down!" added Mr. Jenks.

"The very man!" said the inspector, firmly. "But I don't think he'll fail any quicker than would any of the older hands. I believe in young blood. You'll have to admit that Longman handled the Barlow affair very shrewdly. The deciphering of the cryptogramic messages was a very neat piece of business in my mind. I have had it explained to me by Miller."

"I agree with you, chief. Quite the man. I only wanted to get your opinion of him. Candidly, I think that he is going to turn out to be a credit to the force—sharp as a whip." Mr. Jenks was the chief's legal adviser and secretary, the power behind the throne. To say the least, he was feeling in very good spirits this morning. "Shall I call him in?"

"As you please," said the chief. "Here, you, Jackson, write out a letter of introduction for Longman to Sheriff Whitcomb so I can have it right away."

Soon Mr. Jenks entered with Longman.

Frank Longman was far from looking like a member of the police force. He was a young man of about twenty-five, tall and slender. His complexion was more pale than ruddy, his eyes a deep brown and very expressive, his nose not too prominent, still of the Roman character. He had thin lips and a firm chin. His shoulders were broad and chest full. He was built like a middleweight prizefighter and equally as competent to handle himself. His dress was neat and comfortable, not a mark upon him to be seen that would suggest a thief-catcher. In fact, up to this time he had never had to arrest a man, or rather to use violence in making an arrest. And he was unhampered with gyves or firearms other than a hammerless bulldog carried in his trousers pocket. Longman had had a checkered career for all that.

As a boy he had left home early in life and had knocked around the whole United States. He had tried his hand at many things, chief of which was reporting and doing descriptive writings for newspapers. It was while acting as reporter that he had shown his ability to "run things to earth." Having done Augustus Barlow, the millionaire packer, a favor in suppressing a piece of news, Barlow had recommended him to Inspector Shea for a position in the Secret Service, expecting to employ Frank as a private detective himself, after he had become acquainted with police methods. The young man had been traveling around with one of Shea's finest men for about a month when he received his first commission.

"Longman," said the inspector, "I am going to grant you a leave of absence, with the privilege of working on an outside case." He handed Frank the sheriff's letter. "Do you want it?"

"Sure I want it!" spoke up the detective, eagerly. "Of course I want it. I'm just dying of inaction at present. I want to get onto a real case at once."

"Well, what's your opinion of this case?" asked the inspector.

"Don't forget our agreement, chief," warned Mr. Jenks.

"I am in no position to form an opinion at this time," said Longman.

"Good!" exclaimed the chief, approvingly. "You've started out all right. I am glad that you do not know it all from the start out."

"Thanks, inspector," said Longman, bowing. "I hope you will learn to know me better. I know I am only a novice at this game compared to you, but I hope I can carry out any suggestion you may make."

"I am not going to make any, Longman. Mr. Jenks wants this to be a test of your ability, so I am going to let you win or lose on your own merits. However, I am going to make you this proposition: If you succeed in clearing up this case, I will see that you are paid for all the time that you are off. If you fail, all that you will get will be what Sheriff Whitcomb allows you. Double pay if you win, single pay if you fail. How's that?"

"Nothing if I lose, if you say so. Since you consider this a test of my ability, I will accept the challenge. I may fail, but you can rest assured that I will at least try to solve the mystery. I'll have no kick coming if I fail, either. I only hope that it will prove a complicated affair. I want to earn any money I get. I also want to show you the kind of stuff that I am made of. Mr. Jenks, I want to thank you for this opportunity. You, too, chief."

"You accept the case—win, or no pay?" said Mr. Jenks. "You pick up the glove, as it were?"

"Certainly—why not? It's a fair test—it's a chance to prove my worth. You can bet I'll take it!"

"Consider the preliminaries closed, then, Longman. Here's your authority to work on the case, and some advance expense money. Go to it!" And he shook the young man's hand warmly.

Mr. Jenks escorted Longman to the door.

"No hard feelings, Frank?"

"None in the least. I understand your motive in the matter. I trust this will prove a hard nut to crack, and that I will crack it to your own satisfaction."

Neither thought how hard the cracking of this mystery-nut would prove. It turned out to be more complicated than either supposed.

CHAPTER II.

A QUIET GAME OF CARDS.

FRANK LONGMAN left the inspector's office hurriedly, boarded a car for the railroad station, and soon was questioning the information man as to when he could get a train for Lewiston. He found that the morning train, which made all stops, was gone, and that no other train would leave until 9:20 in the evening.

"Anything of special interest along the line?" asked Longman.

"In what way?" answered the trouble man.

"Booking any shows, circuses, or doing any repairing along the right of way in the neighborhood of Bordenville, for instance?"

"The repair and construction gang have just left Bordenville after putting in a switch, and are now at Kaslovia. There is a show out (one special car) somewhere near Bordenville, and a tent show, Dixon and Dawson's Circus, just finishing the Valley Circuit—seven cars. Why do you ask? You are not on the advance for some show, are you?"

"Not exactly," answered Longman; "I am representing one of the daily papers, and assigned to dig up a little real news. There is always a little something doing in the wake of a circus and tent show. Construction gangs are my special hobby—a few free for all's and a fandango, which usually ends in a factional feud of some kind."

"I guess you'll get all the excitement you want along that territory. The Valley has got to throw a track across the Kaslovia branch of the J. C., and there ought to be some red-hot doings about that time."

"Then I guess that I have picked out the right territory, perhaps may dig up a scoop or two on the way. Much obliged for your information, old man."

"Don't mention it, sir. Remember the time, 9:20—arrive Lewiston 4:15 a. m.," said the clerk.

As Longman turned from the information desk, he almost collided with a man and woman. They had all the earmarks of professional people. The man was tall, dark-complexioned, with piercing eyes and long hair. He was dressed in immaculate attire; high hat, Prince Albert suit, and cane. She was attired in traveling dress, rich and striking, and wore a large hat with waving plumes.

Later Longman found out who they were—Ralph Wharton, the hypnotist, and Rena DeWolfe, who, under the stage names of "Ralph and Rena," gave exhibitions of second sight and mind reading and sleight of hand. They evidently overheard the information clerk in his instructions to Longman.

"Pardon me!" Wharton apologized to Longman. Then to the clerk, "Can't we get a train to Lewiston so we can get in early tonight?"

"No way on earth," said the clerk.

"What is that? A one-road town? How near can we get to it by any other road?"

"Kaslovia—twenty-five miles, on the J. C., arrive Kaslovia at nine o'clock."

"H—l!" exclaimed Wharton.

"I knew you would 'ball' up that engagement!" exclaimed Rena, petulantly. "We should have stopped off at Bordenville instead of coming through to Chicago."

"You know why we came through, don't you? Bordenville was no place for us, after that mixup with the sheriff. Then see what we banked and booked here. Even if we do not make an engagement in Vaughnton, we're ahead of the game."

"Well! What are you going to do about it?"

"Bill Lewiston for tomorrow and cut out Vaughnton—jump back to Chicago for the balance of the week. We ought to clean up a bunch of easy money tomorrow. Come on, Rena, let's beat it!" And the pair hurried out of the station about as fast as they came in.

Longman stood close by ostensibly examining a map on the wall, and managed to hear the conversation. What trouble had these people had with the sheriff? Were these people what they seemed, or, who and what were they, anyhow?

Frank Longman was a strong believer in intuition, and now something told him to watch that pair. When he started after them it was too late; he missed them in the crowd. Somewhat disappointed, he had the satisfaction of knowing that if these people were going to Lewiston he would meet them and find out just who they were.

He boarded a street car and soon was in his own home. Mrs. Longman met him at the door. There was a little tremor of excitement in her voice.

"What's wrong, Frank? You haven't lost your job, have you, that you've come home at this time of the day?"

"I should say not! Just been detailed on a special job that will take me out of town a few days," he replied exultantly.

"Oh, pshaw!" pouted Mildred. "Reporting was bad enough, but this detective business is going to be worse. I wish you'd give it up. You will be brought home on a shutter some day, and then what will I do?"

"No danger. No more danger than in reporting or being a fireman. I've got to make good. Besides, 'absence makes the heart grow fonder.' You'd soon grow tired of me, Mildred, if I hung around too much." And he placed a kiss on the ruby lips. They were lovers still.

At nine o'clock Frank Longman entered the smoking-car of the Valley local. Inasmuch as he would arrive in Lewiston at four in the morning, he did not deem it necessary to take a sleeper; he thought he could amuse himself reading or dozing in his seat.

In one end of the car were seated a group of Italians, evidently new arrivals in America. Their sacks of personal property were piled up in one corner, and one youth of about seventeen was sitting on top of the pile guarding the treasures. The crowd was talking animatedly in their native tongue. The whole gang was presided over by a tall, well-dressed Italian, who was smoking a cigarette and inhaling the smoke.

The other occupants were business men reading evening papers and smoking. In the middle of the car two seats had been turned over, and two young men, with a card table between them, had been trying to organize a card party. As Frank came in, one of the two asked:

"Do you play cards, stranger? Going far?"

"Couple of hundred miles," answered Longman. "What are you going to play?"

"Whist, or any old thing," said one. "Anything to pass the time away."

"I'll take a hand," replied Frank, and threw his small grip into the bundle rack over the seat.

"Reynolds is my name," said the first speaker.

"Mulhall's mine," said the second man.

"Longman's mine," said Frank, as he seated himself. "Whom are we going to get for the fourth man?"

Frank had taken a seat facing the front of the car, and did not see that Wharton had entered the smoker, having left Rena in the chair-car, while he finished his cigar.

"I wouldn't mind taking a hand," said Wharton, eagerly. "Got a long jump ahead of me, and no chance for a sleeper on this beastly line." And he seated himself nonchalantly diagonally across from Longman. "My name is Wharton of the team of Ralph and Rena."

Frank recognized the man as the one he had met in the depot that morning. The trio introduced themselves again, and the game started. Longman paid strict attention to his cards and watched his opponents closely. Reynolds and Mulhall seemed to be ordinary business men. Perhaps young country merchants who had run down to Chicago to buy a few goods and were going right back home, enjoying themselves on the way. Appearances are deceptive, and Longman resolved not to be caught napping. Card games on trains, no matter how mildly started, sometimes end in real gambling games, and many a "rube" has been fleeced out of his all by shrewd players.

In Wharton, Longman recognized a skilled player. There was something in the way that Wharton fingered the cards that denoted skill. His long, slender fingers shook the cards into place when shuffling with the rapidity of lightning, and after looking at his cards once, he closed the book together. When playing he seemed to know just where to go for the card he wanted without spreading them in his hand. He did not appear to be a skilled player, though. Several times he played high cards in following suit, where, had he kept them, playing low, he would have captured extra tricks. Reynolds and Mulhall won almost all of the games played the first hour. Frank was shrewd enough to give Wharton credit for the easy manner in which he lost, because he realized it amounted to nothing in money.

After the conductor had made his first round, gathered up and punched the tickets, he returned to the smoker, and sat back of Longman and watched the game.

Several of the passengers threw aside their reading, and sitting on the arms of their chairs, or standing in the aisle of the car, watched the players. It is wonderful what an attraction a card game has for the traveling public. Spectators seem to get as much enjoyment out of it as the players themselves.

Finally Wharton said to Longman, after making a miserable misplay which netted his opponents the game:

"I'm afraid, partner, you're not getting any fun out of this game. I'm absolutely no good at playing whist. Suppose we change the game to something else—seven-up, hearts, rhum, or something like that. Make it 'everybody for himself and the devil for the h'nd one.'"

"It's agreeable to me," said Longman, anything but poker. While I like the game, my finances will not permit of indulgences."

Several people pressed through the aisle while the conversation was going on, among them Antonio, the Italian section boss. These people left the smoker and went into the chair-car.

"You play rhum, gentlemen?" Wharton asked.

"Sure," echoed both Reynolds and Mulhall.

"Hardly any fun in playing unless you play for money points. What do you say to a nickel a point?"

"Kind of steep, ain't it?" queried Frank.

"Naw!" sneered Wharton; "why, you can't lose more'n twenty or thirty cents a game!"

Frank knew better, but let the sneer pass. A player can lose from five cents to three dollars a hand on this game.

Just then the porter of the chair-car came through and touched Mr. Wharton on the shoulder:

"Is you' name Mr. Wharton?"

"That's me, son. What's wanted?"

"I'se a note for you, sir. Lady in next car," answered the porter, extending a folded piece of paper to him.

Wharton read it, crumpled it in his hands, and threw it, as he thought, in the cuspidor at his feet.

"Beg pardon, gentlemen, for a moment. My partner in the next car wishes to speak to me. Deal them out; I'll be right back."

The crumpled paper struck Longman's foot. He reached down and grabbed it

Be sure and read the great detective story in this issue, entitled "The Triple Mystery; or, Longman's Test Case." It will puzzle and interest you to the last line.

from the floor and placed it in one cuff of his trousers.

"Excuse me," he said, rising. "I'll get a drink of water while I have a chance."

As we have said before, Frank Longman was a great believer in intuition. He could not understand why he did so, but impulsively he distrusted Wharton, and without deliberate intent had grabbed the note and followed the showman. He entered the washroom at the end of the car. As he did so, he turned out the incandescent light which lit the apartment, and then raised the curtain which obstructed the view of the rear end of the car.

It was quite light outside. The light from the chair-car windows made objects discernible on the platform. The washroom was dark within.

Frank saw Rena DeWolfe hand Ralph Wharton a package, then turn and reenter the car. Wharton waited until the door closed. Then he opened the package, which Frank saw was a long, booklike article, evidently a wallet, and transferred several articles to the inside of his coat. Wharton then quickly threw the pocketbook from him into the darkness.

Frank knew what it meant. A robbery had taken place in the chair-car. The goods had been transferred to Wharton, and Wharton in turn had destroyed the evidence, after stowing away the proceeds of the thievery!

CHAPTER III.

WHARTON STACKS THE CARDS.

"WHAT should he do?" queried Longman to himself. Though a detective in the employ of the city of Chicago, he had no legal right to arrest Wharton. If he made a complaint to the conductor, and the conductor in turn telegraphed ahead to have a duly authorized officer make the arrest, undoubtedly Longman would be held as a witness and be compelled to stop off at some town short of his destination. That's the irony of fate —or criminology.

And again, if Wharton was arrested, and later it should turn out that Wharton was implicated in the Miller Bros. and other robberies, as Longman suspected, how could the detective prove it, or at least arrest Wharton? Under the circumstances, Frank came to the conclusion that he had best say nothing, but now that fate had played into his hands, he would watch Wharton to see if he could not get the "goods on him" as to the other robberies.

Hence, just as Wharton stepped back into the smoker, Frank took his seat again at the card table. He looked at his watch; it was just 10:32. He made a note of it.

Wharton was as cool as a cucumber. As he took his seat, he pulled out his cigarette-case and helped himself to a smoke. With one hand he lit his cigarette, and with the other ran through his cards, which had been dealt him previously.

"Sorry to have kept you waiting, gentlemen. But the better half of our team wanted to give me a roast for missing the express this morning! She quite delights in keeping me on the gridiron, and fries me to a frazzle at every opportunity."

Of course, the whole car of people smiled at this witty remark, and the game proceeded with varying fortunes to the players. Longman won one or two hands, which put him on "velvet," as the saying is. Then Reynolds and Mulhall each won a hand before Wharton managed to meld out first. Longman was not hoodwinked, however. He knew that Wharton would pull off a stunt of some kind which would prove a coup sooner or later.

Frank noticed that when Wharton dealt, that gentleman almost invariably made a meld of three cards which had been melded in the same way in a previous hand. Nothing wrong about it apparently, yet very unlikely to happen if the cards had been properly shuffled. After one hand, especially, he saw Wharton pick up the pack and gather all the cards together save three eight-spots. These three cards, evidently unconsciously, were placed on the bottom of the pack, or rather the pack was placed on top of the eights. The cards were presumably well shuffled, and cut, and dealt around. Frank felt, however, that Wharton had deliberately dealt himself the three cards off the bottom of the deck and followed the play closely.

The first time around no cards were melded. The second time around Reynolds played three tens and Longman added a fourth and discarded a king, which was taken up by Mulhall, who did not play, but discarded a jack.

With a laugh Wharton picked up the jack, and immediately played three eights, and the jack, queen, and king of diamonds, throwing away an ace.

"Rhummy!" he exclaimed. "Pay me!"

Frank was caught with thirty in his hand, among which was the fourth eight-spot. Reynolds had the six, seven, and nine of hearts, and jack of clubs. Mulhall was caught with three kings, and the six, seven, and nine of diamonds, and jack of spades. It will be seen by this that the eights held by Wharton absolutely dominated every hand. If Wharton had played them the first time around, Frank could have played his fourth eight, and Mulhall and Reynolds would have both discarded differently, instead of holding in hopes of filling in with the eight-spot.

Mulhall and Reynolds paid over their losses to Wharton with sickly smiles on their faces. Frank counted out his dollar-and-a-half, and pushed it over to the winner, saying:

"Count me out, gentlemen. I'm through!" And he rose from his seat to vacate it for any one else who might care to take it.

Wharton looked at him with his piercing black eyes, and a sneer on his face.

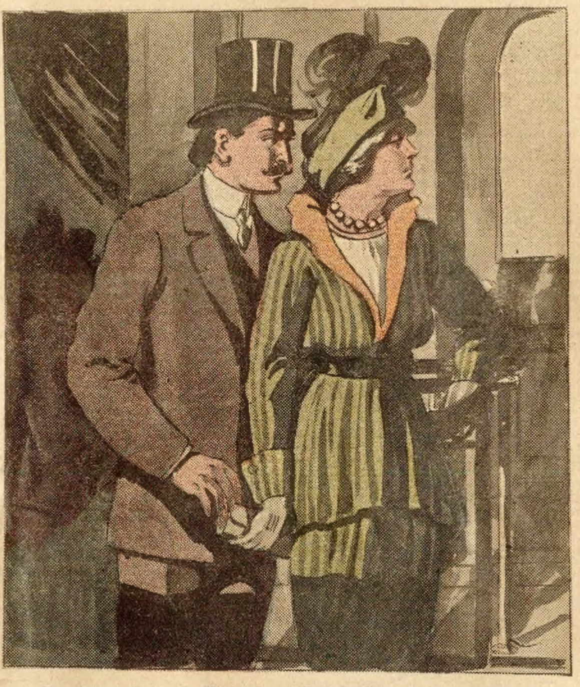
"Quitting after your first loss?" he queried.

"Nope!" replied Longman, in a cold, low tone. "I'm ahead of the game."

Something in Frank's voice nettled the man. Ordinarily self-possessed, he allowed his better judgment to get the best of him. He could not restrain himself from throwing in a parting shot; he imagined that he had an inexperienced "rube" to deal with.

"Oh, I see, something of a piker!"

Frank flushed perceptibly, but kept himself under restraint.



Frank saw Rena De Wolfe hand Ralph Wharton a package.

"It's a wise man who knows when to quit, Wharton. And that goes in talk, just the same as in gambling."

Wharton would have shown good sense if he had let the matter rest right there, but he was so conceited that he felt that he held the whip hand, and as Frank stepped into the aisle, added:

"Playing for beans might suit you better."

"I wouldn't play for beans if I thought that I was going to be beaten, unless I got beaten right."

"Well, you got beaten, all right, all right, I guess!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Depends entirely upon what you call right," said Longman, very quietly. "If you mean that I lost the last hand, you are correct. But if you mean I lost it fairly, I beg to differ with you!"

"What do you mean?"

"Now listen to me, Wharton," replied Frank; "I did not provoke this discussion, and I don't want to continue it. I don't feel like running away under fire, however. I want you to understand that I am no piker, and that I have a perfect right to quit if I want to. It isn't up to you to criticise my actions——"

"Come, come, no quarreling," interrupted the conductor, stepping between Frank and Wharton, who had risen to his feet. "If you are not quiet, and conduct yourselves like gentlemen, I'll have to stop the game!"

"The game's stopped, as far as I am concerned," replied Longman, "but Wharton seems to desire to criticise my actions, and I don't presume to let him."

Wharton foolishly thought because the conductor stood between him and Frank that he could fire one parting shot and get away with it.

"Oh, he's only a piker, anyway; let him go!"

"No more piker than you are an honest man," retorted Frank. "You'd better quiet down, Wharton, or you'll regret it. And it won't be because you dealt off the bottom of the pack, either. I know you, all right. You know what I mean, too. I'd advise you to keep still. I know what happened on the platform!"

Wharton sat down with a thud, never opening his lips. He saw the handwriting on the wall. With stolen money in his pocket—how much he knew not—and without knowing what compromising letters or notes might also be in the package, he dared not provoke Frank further.

"So you saw him deal himself a hand off of the bottom of the pack, did you?" asked the conductor.

"I am satisfied he did," replied Longman; "that's why I quit. Whether I did or not, it is my right to quit when I want to."

"I guess it's best to call off the game," said Conductor Bernstine. "Mr. Mulhall, you and Reynolds had best play among yourselves." He seemed to know them. "And I think, Wharton, you had better go into the other car."

"The man is mistaken!" sputtered Wharton. "But I guess we'd better break up, anyhow." He left the car in a crestfallen manner.

Frank took a seat near the rear end of the car. The passengers were all agog. The immigrants especially were excited, talking in loud whispers and gesticulating vehemently.

Bernstine came and sat beside Frank after the train made a stop at the next station. The young man had just looked at his watch; it was a little past twelve.

"How did you come to see Wharton do this dealing?" he asked.

"I'm not quite blind," said Frank, diplomatically exposing one arm of his detective badge to the conductor. "Something else transpired on this train tonight which made me suspicious of him."

"Are you employed by the railroad?" asked the conductor, who suddenly became wise.

"Not exactly. Why do you ask?"

"Didn't know but what you were detailed here to investigate some of the robberies which have taken place on our trains lately. Only the other night a passenger claimed to have been touched."

"Your train?" asked Longman.

"No. 52; the one I follow in. My train on this trip is No. 51."

"Anybody suspected?"

"Didn't hear. Car was full of passengers; a traveling tent-show gang. Possibly some three card-monte men among them. Two or three games going on. Gang got into a fight between Kaslovia and Bordenville, and had to call in the sheriff to settle it."

Frank whistled softly to himself. Wharton was then implicated in this other train robbery, he felt sure. It wouldn't do for him to implicate Wharton at this time, though, because to do so would narrow the possibility of implicating him in the Lewiston and other robberies. So he said nothing about the showman.

If Frank had known what was happening in the chair-car he would not have been so considerate of Wharton, but would have placed the man in custody at once.

Wharton, when he left the smoker, entered the saloon at the end of the chair-car. After locking the door, he took from his pocket the material stolen from the wallet. The bills he placed in his own book, and all the papers he tore up and threw out of the window. There was a look of relief, and also one of blackening fury on his face, when he came out into the car.

He took his seat beside Rena DeWolfe.

"What's the matter?" she demanded, in a startled tone.

"There's a wise guy out in the smoker. He caught me palming the cards. I called him, and he shot the bluff into me that he knew who I was, and if I didn't shut up he would say more!"

"Do you suppose that he saw us pass the stuff?"

"Wouldn't be surprised. He intimated as much. Did you see any one follow me?"

"I saw some one coming toward the door. He didn't come out, though. That Italian fellow, Antonio, came through just ahead of you."

"Whom do you mean?" That section boss we had on the stage with us the other night? The one I hypnotized?"

"Sure! The same one!"

"Where is he now?"

"Back in the corner asleep."

"I wonder if I couldn't work the pass on him again, and get him under my control? I think that wise guy in the smoker is onto our game, and I believe if I could get Antonio to knock him on the head, it would save some trouble!"

"For God's sake, Ralph, be careful! You don't realize what you do sometimes. Suppose you killed the man—or Antonio killed him. If it were ever found out, it would go hard with you!"

"Bah! You were always a coward, Rena."

"Coward, yes! But not quite a blamed fool. You have done enough now to get a long term in the pen."

"Oh, shut up! Don't make a scene. I'll fix Antonio so he will lay out Longman, all right."

He went back to where Antonio was quietly dozing. In a dexterous manner he ran his fingers over the man's temples; and, as he awakened, made another pass in front of the startled man's eyes, and Wharton knew that he had the man under his control.

The hypnotist quietly sat down beside the section boss and conversed with him for a few moments. Rena had turned in her seat and was watching them critically. The other passengers were quietly dozing. About half of the lights were turned low, and no one seemed to have noticed the byplay.

Rena saw Antonio shake his head several times in refusal, and then Wharton made a few passes before the unsuspecting Italian as if emphasizing his remarks. Then Antonio nodded "Yes." Wharton returned to his partner.

"I've fixed it!" he said, exultantly.

A few minutes afterward Antonio arose from his seat and made his way into the smoker. Wharton followed him to the door, gesticulating behind him, propelling him forward by hypnotic suggestion.

The gang talked vehemently together. They eyed Frank closely—so closely that Longman became aware of it. He naturally believed that the Italians were informing Antonio about the card game, and he did not think of anything serious in connection with it.

Just before arriving at Lewiston, the whole gang carted their belongings to the rear end of the car and quite blockaded the aisle and platform. As the train came to a standstill, Longman took his suitcase down, and started to leave the car. Of course, he tried to get through the gang so that he would not have to wait for the whole crew to alight. They let him get about halfway through, and then he found himself surrounded.

Some one deliberately kicked him in the shins. As he turned with an exclamation of pain and surprise, he received a blow full in the face from Antonio. He crashed through the doorway, and fell headlong upon the car steps and platform totally unconscious!

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this remarkable story. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

* * *

Not for Him.

A German farmer was in search of a driving horse.

"I've got just the horse for you," said the liveryman. "He's five years old, sound as a dollar and goes ten miles without stopping."

The German threw his head skyward.

"Not for me," he said, "not for me. I lif eight miles from town, and mit dot horse I haf to valk back two miles."

* * *

In Haste.

A local paper tells of a clergyman who received this note telling him to perform a marriage ceremony:

"This is to give you notis that I and Miss Jemima Arabella Brearly is coming to your church on Saturday afternoon next to undergo the operation of matrimoney at your hands. Please be prompt, as the cab is hired by the hour."

A Wife's Tragedy

Or, The Day of Reckoning

By Granville Osborne

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CHAPTER V.

WHETHER Lance Blake's position on the garden-seat was not conducive to comfortable repose, or whether inquisitive flies disturbed his slumbers and rendered them fitful and uneasy, cannot exactly be known, but as a fact those slumbers were broken by dreams of a most disquieting nature. He was running madly through a dense wood in the endeavor to catch Herrick to tell him something—he knew not what—of vital importance. But Herrick was annoying, and with maddening persistency seemed to take a malignant pleasure in eluding him. At length, however, Lance did manage to overtake and seize him, when to his inexpressible vexation, on looking closer at his face he found it to be that of his unwelcome traveling companion of the previous day, who, when he saw him, with his grating, hard laugh, exulted in his mistake. With an exclamation of annoyance Lance flung him from him, and—nearly tumbled off the seat upon which he had been reclining.

Relieved to find he had only been dreaming, he was stooping to pick up his pipe, which had slipped to the ground, when—was he not awake yet? Surely he again heard that unpleasant laugh? Close beside him, too! By Jove, yes! There it was, and the man's voice speaking, too. What? Lance was wide awake now, and distinctly heard these words:

"Must wait and see what their first move will be."

Then followed the sound of another voice speaking in reply, but, though Lance strained his ears to the uttermost, he could only distinguish a confused murmur. The speakers were evidently moving away from his vicinity, and though he remained perfectly still for some moments to listen, nothing more could he hear.

As he stepped boldly out from behind a belt of evergreens, he came suddenly upon a tiny, comfortable-looking cottage inclosed in a little garden, and in this garden he saw a woman busily engaged in hanging out some freshly-washed garments upon a line to dry. At Lance's "Good morning," she turned around with a start and became aware of his presence. She was old and stout, with iron-gray hair arranged "curtain-ways" on either side of a not unpleasing countenance. She was evidently possessed of manners, for she received Lance's advances with a sweeping gesture from the waist—something between a bow and a curtsy.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, I'm sure, sir!" she exclaimed. "I were that busy, what with being all behind this morning, I declare I didn't hear you comin'. An' you've lost your way, sir, as they allus does in this garding? It's that mazy, it's only Gapp as knows it, I believe. And you'd like to come through this way, perhaps? It's a bit shorter than going round. But perhaps you ain't seen all that you may want to see yet, sir?"

"Oh, yes, thank you!" hastily answered Lance, breaking in on this flood of eloquence, for which he was inwardly blessing his lucky stars, as in the delight of hearing her own voice the good lady paused neither for breath nor for questions, which might have been awkward to parry. "I shall be very glad to accept your offer, as I am rather late."

She was about to lead the way through the little porch into her house, when a clatter and a rumble from behind them caused both Lance and herself to turn round, when the former, to his no little amusement, beheld at the gate he had just entered his friend of the wheelbarrow.

But if Lance thought that Mr. Gapp would show any signs of previous acquaintance with himself, he was mistaken. That gentleman merely indulged in an unrecognizing stare, as he proceeded to wheel his barrow into the garden. Mrs. Gapp, meanwhile, had drawn herself up stiffly, and folding her arms, gave vent to a significant sniff.

"Oh, so you're back, are you?" she remarked, with an emphasis on this very self-evident fact that was somewhat surprising to Lance. "Well, you ain't bin killed with hard work this morning, that's one thing. And here's this gentleman has lost his way in some of your old holes and corners, but—— Oh, there's my pot a-boilin' over!" She suddenly broke off and disappeared into the interior of the cottage, whence issued a terrific noise of crackling and spitting as if a whole row of woodsheds had suddenly caught fire.

This gave Lance the opportunity he had longed for from the moment of Mr. Gapp's appearance. He turned now toward that individual.

"I say, my man," he began, as carelessly as he could, "can you tell me who that young lady is whom I met just now in the garden?"

But Mr. Gapp's countenance presented a most uncomprehending vacuity.

"Young leddy?" he repeated slowly. "There wasn't never no young leddy in our garding this mornin'."

"Oh, but there was, I assure you!" said Lance. "A very pretty young lady, with dark eyes and curly hair, dressed all in white. Why, what is the matter with you, man?" For Mr. Gapp, looking the very picture of terror, had suddenly collapsed into his own wheelbarrow.

"Oh, oh!" he gasped. Yes, I've been a sinful man—I know I have; but I does my duty by the garding. And now in my old age it's come upon me."

"What's come, in the name of fortune?" shouted Lance. "What are you talking about, you old fool?"

"What am I talking about?" said Mr. Gapp, in an injured tone, as he slowly gathered himself out of the recesses of the barrow. "It's you that ought to know better—that a-harryin' my old wits with your talk of ghostes."

"Ghosts!" echoed Lance, in amazement. "Who said a word about ghosts? I only said I met a young lady in white—— Here, where are you off to now?"

For the old man had suddenly straightened himself, and seizing the handles of his barrow, was making off as hard as he could in the direction of what appeared to be some stables—quicker than Lance could have thought possible.

His first impulse was to follow, but at that moment the portly form of Mrs. Gapp issued from the cottage.

Hope you'll excuse me, sir; but I quite forgot the dinner. And now if you'll come this way—— Mind your head, sir! Here you are! Here's the lane, and it'll take you straight to the high road.

So full was Lance's mind of the beautiful stranger he had that morning encountered, that as soon as he had finished the luncheon which he found awaiting him, he gathered his sketching materials and set about endeavoring to commit to paper whilst fresh in his memory, the exquisite features that had made so deep an impression upon him.

Herrick, coming in later, found the artist deeply absorbed in his task.

"What! inspired already by the beauties of Hillington?" he exclaimed. "But Lance, what a lovely face! Whose is it?"

"Jack," said Lance, "if any one would tell me whose it is, I would give them almost anything they liked to ask for."

"This sounds serious," said Herrick, taking a seat directly opposite his friend. "Can it be that Lance Blake's roving wings have really been singed at last? Tell me at once, please, how you have been spending this morning!"

Thus commanded, Lance laid down his brush, and commenced a full recital of his morning's adventures.

Herrick composed himself to silence, and listened patiently to a lengthy, minute and impassioned description of the fairy princess, and then laughed heartily at the accident of his friend's imprisonment in the maze.

But when Lance came to relate the incident of the voice he had overheard speaking, and repeated the words it had uttered, he suddenly displayed a most eager interest, which seemed to Lance quite out of all proportion with the matter.

"What an extraordinary thing! To whom did the man refer, I wonder?" he exclaimed more than once.

"I don't know," answered Lance, impatiently, "and what it matters to you is more than I can understand."

Herrick laughed and resumed his usual manner.

"Do you know, Lance," he said, "I begin to think that this very ubiquitous person must be the veritable Trent himself? For, now that I reflect, he does certainly answer in some respects the description you gave of your old man of the sea."

"Do you know him, then?" asked Lance, with interest.

"Yes—that is, I had to go to his office for an order when I first visited the grounds, soon after we reached here. He is the agent for the Carisforth estate, you must know. But Lance, I am forgetting to give you a message. Mr. Carew is interested in you. I have been telling him of your visit here. He, unlike most invalids, takes a lively interest in other people, and he would be pleased if you would care to pay him a visit. It will do him a lot of good if you will, and you will find him a most interesting companion. I am sure, too, it would amuse him greatly if you were to tell him the whole of your morning's adventures."

"But shan't I be giving myself away all round?" asked Lance, with rather a dismayed expression.

"Certainly not!" answered Herrick. "Mr. Carew has a mind above such petty or conventional quibbles. Besides, he is particularly interested in the family of Carisforth and their sad story; indeed, I may tell you now that it was the late Squire who was his former friend here, so you can understand how keen his interest is in anything that relates to them."

CHAPTER VI.

THE next morning it was raining heavily. Summer had suddenly given place to autumn, it seemed to Lance, as he stood gazing disconsolately out upon the street. A wild wind tore and raged without, and the atmosphere was undeniably chilly.

Hillington was not desperately exciting on a fine day, and on a pouring wet one, such as this, it presented an aspect of desolation which was calculated to make a chance visitor contemplate suicide.

A note from Herrick announced a second misfortune. The note was written in haste to say that unfortunately Mr. Carew had been seized the night before with an attack similar to that which caused Herrick's first introduction to him. He dared not, therefore, leave him, nor would Mr. Carew be well enough to receive Lance himself for a day or two. As soon as he was able, Herrick would come to the inn.

His loneliness was rapidly becoming more and more acute, when suddenly there came slowly rumbling into sight down the street the rickety and dilapidated vehicle known in Hillington as the station coach. This was a crazy-looking kind of a vehicle drawn by a big white horse of scraggy and attenuated appearance.

When it drew up at the door of the hotel, Lance's interest was aroused, and greatly increased by his observation of the fact that the passenger inside was a lady. He caught a glimpse of a rather smart sailor hat and a fair face.

Good! It was almost time for his usual afternoon tea. He would wait a few moments and then adjourn to the coffeeroom to inspect the newcomer. Watch in hand, he waited impatiently till ten minutes had passed, then, opening the door, he strolled into the other room.

The lady was standing in the recess of the bay window looking out, as he had done, upon the street. Alas for all his fondly-cherished hopes! The newcomer was not beautiful by any means, and—still greater disappointment—neither was she young.

In spite of her slight figure, she was evidently well over forty, and the chin was much too large and the eyes too sunken for their owner ever to have been handsome, even before lines of sorrow had laid their indelible touch upon her face.

But Lance was presently conscious of one charm, at least, which she possessed, and that of no mean order; for when the waiter brought the meal she had ordered, she addressed one or two necessary questions to him, and gave evidence not only of a most pleasant voice, but one that had evidently been elocutionarily trained, so curiously and softly penetrating was it in sound.

Who and what was she? Lance wondered. And what was she doing in this benighted little hole of a place, where, judging from the amount of her belongings, she had evidently come to stay? Again and again were his eyes drawn in the direction of the stranger.

She had now finished her tea, and like himself, appeared to find a decided lack of amusement in her present surroundings, judging from her unmistakable expression of boredom, which Lance began to think must nearly, if not quite, equal his own.

Here were two people, both equally desirous for the companionship of one of their own social position; both suffering an equal amount of ennui; both equally destitute of shyness, equally interested in each other, isolated together in the empty coffeeroom of an out-of-the-way country hotel on a wet day.

The result was a foregone conclusion. The lady, by right of her sex and maturer age, at length threw conventionality to the winds and addressed Lance.

"What a thoroughly hopeless day it is!" she remarked desperately, as she advanced nearer to the fire, which the landlady, with happy disregard of the calendar, had directed to be kindled early in the day. "Excuse me, but I really should be so very glad to talk a little, if you don't mind; it is so very tiresome here."

"I should think it most extremely kind on your part," responded Lance, quick to rise to the occasion—"how kind you can form no idea, for I have been shut up here nearly the whole day, and it has been almost too much for my nerves."

"The whole day!" echoed the lady. "You are staying here, then?"

"Yes," Lance replied, "but not entirely on account of the rural charms of this little hamlet. I have a very great friend here, but unfortunately his society is not available today, and, as I am ashamed to say, I am not anything of a reader, I have felt rather stranded."

"Indeed, I am most heartily sorry for you," said the lady. "Alone in the country on a wet day, with no books and no friends. Now, if you really don't mind telling me, what have you been doing to kill time?"

"Looking out of the window," promptly replied Lance. "I have seen three pedestrians, one vehicle, four geese, and six fowls, not forgetting a stray dog or two."

"The absence of population, I must say, struck me as remarkable as I drove from the station," said the lady.

"The folks here take life leisurely," said Lance—"as perhaps you are aware," he added somewhat artfully.

"Not from personal experience," replied his companion. "This is my first visit to Hillington." Lance fancied that a sigh accompanied this statement, and for a few moments there was silence. Then the lady resumed speaking. "But I have heard a good deal about it from a friend of mine who used to live here, and, as I am looking out for a house in the country, I thought I would come and see if anything here would be likely to suit me."

"If so, would you really contemplate settling down for the rest of your existence here?" asked Lance.

"Hardly that," replied the lady; "I fear I am too much of a rolling stone. I am a rather lonely woman, with no near ties, and I seldom stay very long in the same place. Having said so much about myself, I may as well go on and tell you that I am a solitary spinster of independent means, and that my name is Helena Sandbrook."

Lance rose and bowed.

"And mine is Lancelot Blake," he said—a bachelor, of no profession, and at present traveling for amusement."

"And now, Mr. Blake," she said, "'a bachelor of no profession' can confer a great favor upon 'a solitary spinster' by telling her if there is anything of interest to be seen in this neighborhood."

"There is one place, certainly, that seems to invite inspection," answered Lance. "Perhaps you noticed as you came from the station a house with very extensive gardens on your left? The grounds are beautiful and well worth a visit——" he was continuing, when Miss Sandbrook interrupted him by saying quietly:

"You are speaking of Carisforth? Yes, I have heard of it from the friend I mentioned."

"And its story also, I suppose?" Lance added.

"Do you allude to the story of the beautiful and wicked teacher who trifled with the affections of both the cousins, married the richer, and then ran away with the other?"

Lance looked up in surprise. Miss Sandbrook's tone was perfectly quiet and entirely free from any suggestion of levity or contempt; but somehow this speech was not quite what he would have expected to hear from the kind of woman she appeared to be. But her face was quite expressionless.

"Well, Mr. Blake," she said, "is not that the story you meant?"

"Yes, that is certainly one version of it," answered Lance, "but not quite the same as the one I have been told."

"Indeed! You surprise me!" said Miss Sandbrook. "I imagined that all the population of Hillington would naturally take the same view of the matter as their Squire and the owner of the estate."

"I can assure you, then, that there is one, at least, who does not," answered Lance, "and that is the person who was the first to tell me of the unhappy affair—the landlady of this very hotel where we are staying."

"But what reason has she for her difference of opinion?" inquired Miss Sandbrook, still in an unemotional manner.

"Well, it seems, for one thing, that she knew Mrs. Carisforth personally, even before her marriage, and appears to have been sincerely attached to her. She declares that Miss Darvell, as she was then, was a lady of most exemplary conduct; also that there were no grounds whatever for supposing that she gave any encouragement to the attentions of Mr. Denzil Carisforth, toward whom the good lady seems to entertain a most decided aversion. But I would suggest, Miss Sandbrook, that you hear for yourself the story as told by Mrs. Harper. She will be only too delighted to relate it, as I can vouch for from personal experience."

"Thank you! I shall probably do so," she answered, rising as she spoke. "And now I expect my room will be ready, so I can go and unpack my belongings. We shall meet again presently, Mr. Blake, perhaps."

To a degree that surprised even himself, Lance was curiously interested in this solitary and unconventional woman. She strongly aroused, yet baffled, his curiosity. At dinner and afterward, when they again met and talked together, there was still the same haunting sense of mystery about her. Of places and all abstract things she could and did talk fluently and intelligently; but of peeple never. She had owned herself without relations; she appeared also friendless, yet seemed in all respects fitted to shine in any society. But what most perplexed Lance was a suggestion of something familiar in her face, which, try as he would to recall, ever eluded his recollection.

"A regular oddity," he summed her up in his own mind, when, pleading fatigue, she retired somewhat early. "What it is about her face that recalls some one or something to me, I can't for the very life of me make out."

As the evening advanced the wind and rain had increased in fury. The windows rattled, the doors groaned and creaked, as the force of the storm expended itself and seemed at times to threaten the destruction of the whole building. Feeling sleep to be impossible in the noise of the storm, Lance betook himself to the parlor, and begged permission of Mrs. Harper to bear her company for a while.

The landlady was evidently not her usual placid self, for some reason or other, and seeing the nervous start she gave every now and then at the noise of the wind, Lance put it down to anxiety for the safety of her house.

"What a terrible night!" she exclaimed, as a fresh burst of wind struck the house like a blow.

"And so unusual for this time of year, too," remarked Lance. "I don't think I ever remember a storm like this before in August—do you, Mrs. Harper?"

"Yes, sir, I do," she replied; and, to his surprise, Lance noticed that her pallor and state of agitation seemed increased. "You'll remember, perhaps, sir," she presently resumed, my telling you about the storm we had in Hillington the night of the Squire's wedding. That was just such a one as this."

"And that was in August, too, I think you said?" answered Lance.

"Yes, sir—it was the twenty-fifth."

"And this is—why, yes, this is the twenty-fifth, too!" said Lance. "How very singular!"

The landlady nodded her head and compressed her lips with an expression of considerable meaning.

"Eighteen years ago," she said, in an awe-struck tone—"eighteen years, and just such a storm! I don't know how it is, sir, but I can't help feeling as if something was going to happen—I don't know what, but something dreadful, I am sure! Hark!" she exclaimed suddenly, rising from her chair. "Mercy on us! What's that?"

Lance also had leaped to his feet, for above the howling of the wind and the beating of the rain was to be heard, louder and louder, the sound of a horse galloping madly, tearing down the street. The horse came nearer and nearer, and then for a second seemed to slacken its pace and all but pause in front of the hotel. The next moment it was heard, faster than ever, again dashing by and clattering away in the distance.

So startling and unwonted was the whole episode that it was not until the sound was dying away that either Lance or the landlady relaxed their listening attitude or broke the silence by speaking, the former being the first to recover himself.

"What can it be?" he exclaimed. "A horse broken loose, do you think, or somebody going for a doctor or the fire engine?"

But the landlady, white and flurried still, had sunk into her chair.

"Oh, sir," she exclaimed, "there are ghosts abroad tonight, I do believe! There was only one horse and one rider I ever heard the like of before, and that was eighteen years ago. It's either Denzil Carisforth or his ghost!"

And Helena Sandbrook, from out her uneasy slumber, awoke with a cry of pain and terror, and a voice from the long-past years sounding in her ears. Had the storm-wind indeed borne upon its rushing wings a phantom from out its grave in the hidden past?

CHAPTER VII.

A BRIGHT, fine morning, with a brisk wind, succeeded the storm, which, abating soon after midnight, had finally fled with the darkness.

Lance, descending late to breakfast, found a note from Herrick saying that Mr. Carew was so far better that he should be able to accompany him that afternoon on their expedition to Carisforth, if it remained fine weather. The morning happily continuing propitious, they set forth immediately after luncheon.

On the way Lance entertained his friend with an account of the fresh arrival at the hotel the day before, and how he had made acquaintance with Miss Sandbrook.

"What, another?" was Herrick's comment. "And you have not yet been here three days. Upon my word, Lance, you are getting on!"

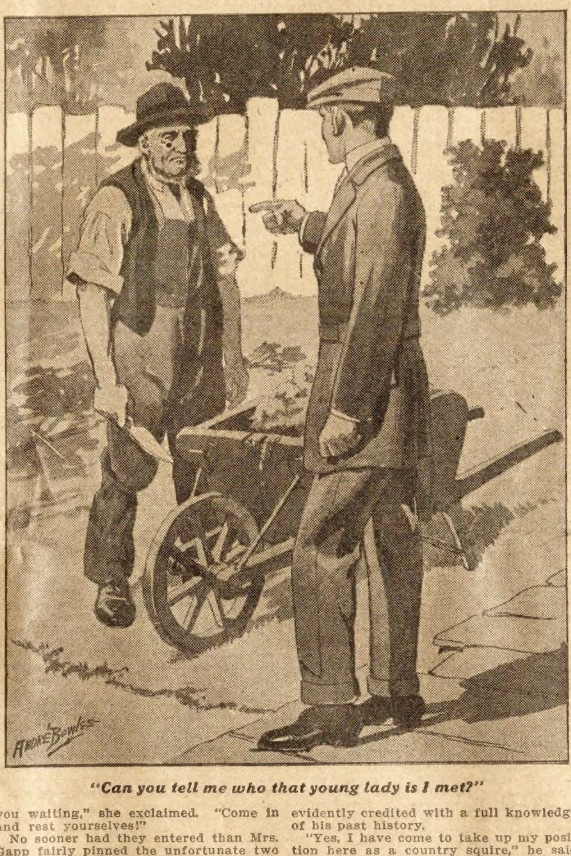
"Nonsense!" retorted Lance. "Haven't I told you that Miss Sandbrook is quite old?"

"All the more dangerous on that account," answered Herrick. "Pray, where is the lady today, and why have I not been permitted to have a glimpse of her?"

Lance explained that she had breakfasted in her own room and then gone out—he imagined on some distant expedition, as she had informed the landlady that she should not be in until half-past two.

They had now arrived at the door of Mrs. Gapp's cottage, but on knocking thereat no response was made to their appeal. Knocking again, somewhat louder, their persistence was soon rewarded, for Mrs. Gapp came busily along the walk leading from the garden.

"Oh, I beg your parding for keeping you waiting," she exclaimed. "Come in and rest yourselves!"



"Can you tell me who that young lady is I met?"

No sooner had they entered than Mrs. Gapp fairly pinned the unfortunate two and commenced relating the whole history of an acute attack of bronchitis she had suffered from in the autumn of the previous year. Lance, glancing out of the window, saw a stranger approaching the gate. He was tall and finely formed, with tanned face, well-shaped nose, and a sweeping dark mustache.

Coming to the gate, the man hesitated for a moment; then, unfastening it, came in and walked up to the cottage door.

"Here's another visitor for you, Mrs. Gapp," said Lance, as a sharp knock came from the door.

But Mrs. Gapp, impatient at being interrupted, shouted "Come in!" and resumed the thread of her story.

The stranger seemed to need no further invitation, but opening the door, he walked quietly into the room, took in all its occupants with one quick glance, and said:

"Good day, Mrs. Gapp!"

If a thunderbolt had fallen at the feet of that lady it would have been impossible for her to look more thoroughly and completely astounded. For once even her voluble tongue was mute. She stood staring at the stranger, as if a specter had arisen before her, in silent and helpless amazement.

And then in a flash of enlightenment, Herrick and Lance knew that this handsome, haggard-looking man, standing with a gleam of something like amusement in his dark eyes, could be no other than the villain of the landlady's story—Denzil Carisforth!

"Oh," at length ejaculated Mrs. Gapp, "if it ain't Mr. Denzil—the Squire, I would say, to be sure! You have appeared so sudden-like, and after these many years——" And then, what with surprise and fright, the good lady melted into tears. In order to give her time to recover herself, Herrick, pitying her agitation, turned to Denzil Carisforth and began to explain his own and Lance's presence in the cottage.

"My friend and I," he said, "not being aware of your arrival, had called to obtain admittance to the grounds, but understanding that they are closed today, we were just about to take our departure."

"Indeed, I trust that you will not do so," Denzil Carisforth interposed. "Will you and your friend give me the pleasure of your society in a walk through the grounds? I really ask it as a favor, as I find myself very solitary today."

As they proceeded on their way, Herrick felt himself in duty bound to furnish their host with the name and present abode of both Lance and himself.

On his part Mr. Carisforth made several allusions to his present novel situation, with a sang-froid and unconcern that rather astonished his visitors, whom he evidently credited with a full knowledge of his past history.

"Yes, I have come to take up my position here as a country squire," he said casually. "It remains to be seen how it will suit me. If people about here call, I shall be civil to them, but if they don't —well, they can stay away. I can do very well without them. I don't see why one's neighbors must necessarily become one's friends. I prefer to choose my own; and I generally know directly I see people how I shall get on with them."

There was something delicately flattering to the vanity of his present companions in the foregoing speech, and Lance for one appreciated it. As a companion and host, Mr. Carisforth was proving himself an unqualified success.

"He may be a scoundrel," Lance thought, as they went along, "but I am hanged if he isn't good company!"

Herrick's reflections meanwhile ran in a different groove. As the three went on, some remaining traces of the recent storm eventually brought the conversation around to that subject.

"Yes, the condition of the elements yesterday was not exactly exhilarating," remarked Mr. Carisforth. "It fairly gave me the blues, I confess, down here in the country. Hence my gratitude to you for your society today. What did you do with yourself all day, Mr. Blake, at the place you are stopping?"

"Nothing," replied Lance, promptly; "and I did it very effectively and completely, I assure you."

"Well, the situation got quite beyond my powers of endurance as night approached," continued Mr. Carisforth, "so about ten o'clock I could stand it no longer, but ordered my mare to be saddled, and set off for a ride. A good gallop always sets me right again; and by all the powers, I did ride!"

Lance turned quickly with a start. The landlady's intuition had not been a mistaken one, then. The wild rider was Denzil Carisforth.

It was not until Lance and Herrick had accepted an invitation to call and inspect the house itself on the following day that their host finally allowed them to take their departure, expressing as he did so a hope that a later date might be fixed for dining with him.

"Well, Jack," Lance began, as at length they set forth upon their homeward way, "we have not seen my fairy princess, but I should never have believed it if any one had told me this morning that you and I should be hobnobbing this afternoon with the new Squire of Carisforth and found him on the whole rather a good fellow and pleasant companion."

"Herrick's smile was a little ambiguous. "Humph!" he said dryly, "I didn't think I had yet expressed any opinion of him."

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Lance. "Don't you like him?"

"I think he was precious glad to get hold of the company of two men of his own social status; yet that was not his only reason, I believe, for being so overwhelmingly civil."

"What was it, then?" demanded Lance, as Herrick paused. "Don't be so mysterious, man! Out with it!"

"Lance," began his friend, "I have decided to repose a confidence in you which up till now I have thought it better to withhold."

"All right! Go ahead!" said Lance, greatly wondering what all this could mean.

"I told you," said Herrick, "of Mr. Carew's interest in the Carisforths and their extraordinary story. I will now add that this interest is the leading idea of his whole existence and is, in fact, why we are now in Hillington. In a word, he is determined to find out by every means in his power the real truth of those most unhappy events which led to the banishment and sufferings of his unfortunate friend."

"What! Does he believe the wife not guilty, after all?" exclaimed Lance. "Jack, it's absurd! Every single fact goes against her, in spite of what Mrs. Harper may say."

"One moment, please—not so fast!" said Herrick. "It appears that the late Squire in his last illness, for some reasons not known, began to have doubts himself on the matter, which he communicated to his friend, whom he implored with his dying breath to take the matter in hand. He must have urged it pretty strongly, for it was from rising too soon from a bed of illness to undertake it that Mr. Carew is now in this helpless state. This is partly why he confided the whole story to me and asked me to do the active part of it for him. So far, with endless trouble, we have only discovered one thing, but that in itself is much. When Mrs. Carisforth left her home it was not to go to this man whose acquaintance you and I have made today."

"But where was it, then?" asked Lance, breathlessly.

"To an old friend of her own," Herrick answered; "a lady who nursed her through the illness which seized her the very same day, and in whose arms she died."

"And how, Jack, did you find all this out?" inquired Lance, deeply interested.

"By going to the place where Mrs. Carisforth died and was buried," answered Herrick. "It was the only clew there was, and it was a task of extreme difficulty, owing to the long time that has since elapsed. But by dint of making the fullest and most exhaustive inquiries, assisted by detectives, we did discover that Mrs. Carisforth went to this friend, and in her house was taken ill with brain fever and died. But the unfortunate thing is, that of the friend herself not a trace can be discovered. She has disappeared completely, leaving not a single clew by which she might be discovered."

"Have you advertised for her?" asked Lance.

"Systematically and continually," answered Herrick, "but with so far not the slightest result. Unfortunately, she was an actress, and we begin to think that the name she then bore—which, I should tell you, was Hilary Le Crew—could not have been her own. Then, besides, her constantly shifting change of abode makes the search still more hopeless, even if she is not dead, as I sometimes think she must be."

"What an extraordinary thing it is altogether!" commented Lance. "And to think of your turning amateur detective, Jack! That's what fetches me."

"Yes; and, as I must tell you," continued Herrick, "unfortunately our inquiries, though carefully guarded, have attracted the attention of Mr. Denzil Carisforth's solicitors, who for some reason are most suspicious of them."

"But why?" asked Lance. "The fact of the child being dead makes his position quite secure."

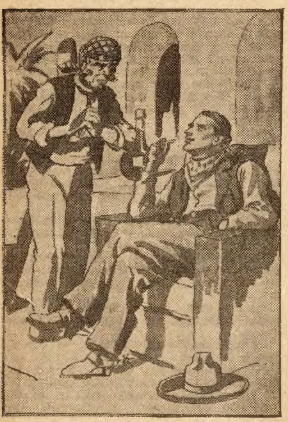
"Yes; but if he is going to pose here as a respectable country squire, as you heard him intimate just now, he won't care about this matter being raked up again in any way," said Herrick. "And now comes in the most curious part of it all. Up till the day you came here, I believed that no one had any notion of my own connection with the affair. Then directly you told me of your being

(Continued on page nineteen.)

Red Dick O'Laughlin

Or, THE CHIHUAHUA TRAIL

By Stephen Gaillard, Author of "Frontivard, the Terrible"



"A thousand pardons, sir."

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CHAPTER XVI.

A STROLL BY MOONLIGHT.

WHEN Quintin Bandera had left Villa's apartment in the Governor's palace, technically under arrest, and in charge of Lieutenant Salvator, he had gone first, with that officer, straight to where his regiment was quartered. There he had briefly informed the Major Tello, of his arrest, and turned over the command to him; then, turning to Salvator, "Lieutenant," he said, "as I have had no opportunity to find quarters, and as you are responsible for my person to General Villa, perhaps you will permit me to share yours?"

Salvator was more than willing, he was honored. In disgrace he might be for the time being, but Bandera was one of the most noted fighters in Villa's army, and the young Lieutenant, whose first bid for fame had been a gallant charge against a machine-gun battery at Juarez, entertained only the most profound respect for a man so high above him in rank and reputation.

Salvator's quarters were in the palace. The night was beautiful, the moonlight making of the streets an eerie fairyland of light and shadow, traversing which a soldier might dream dreams of fame or his lady-love, accordingly as his mood was ruled by sentiment or ambition. Bandera suggested that they traverse the distance to the palace—about half a mile or more—on foot. Salvator acquiesced readily.

Tempted by the beauty of the night, the pair, instead of going direct, took a roundabout course, and strolled, rather than hurried, to their destination. Bandera's reflections, though he had ample food for them, were not sufficiently pleasant for him to care to pursue them, and so the pair soon fell into conversation. The Lieutenant had a pocket full of excellent cigars, which he placed at the Colonel's disposal; the latter, who was really an educated man and a good talker when in the mood, condescended to relate, not without embellishment, some of his experiences, which had been many and varied, for the subaltern's delectation. So, talking and smoking, they strolled on in the moonlight, hardly taking note of the way they went, until they found themselves in a broad avenue lined on either hand with giant cypress trees which cast fantastic shadows across the open road, and threw the footways into ebon obscurity alternated with broad patches of silvery radiance.

Suddenly Bandera, who had been describing the fight in Mexico City when Madero was overthrown, broke off in the middle of a sentence, and seizing his companion by the arm, drew him behind the trunk of a cypress.

"Ten thousand devils!" he exclaimed, "look—look yonder! I know that man!"

Far down the avenue a figure had emerged from the obscurity, hurried across the moonlit street, and disappeared upon the other side.

"Who is he?" whispered Salvator, eagerly.

"Red Dick O'Laughlin, of whose escape at Santiago de los Caballeros you heard me tell the General. Nombre de Dios! what can he be doing here?"

"Let us hurry and overtake him," said Salvator. "I fancy the General would like to talk to him."

"You fancy! Boy, he is worth a hundred thousand pesos if we capture him! Come on; but be careful; keep in the shadow of the trees and go around the patches of moonlight. If he sees us before we get the drop on him, the chances are ten to one he will escape. He is a crafty devil."

The two officers, with drawn revolvers—it had not entered Salvator's mind to deprive the Colonel of his weapons—hurried on as fast as the precautions they were obliged to take permitted. They were nearly opposite a gate leading into the garden of a mansion on the other side of the avenue, when Salvator, laying his hand upon the Colonel's arm, exclaimed eagerly:

"Look, look! he is coming this way."

"Nombre de Dios! it is even so!" and Bandera dragged his companion behind a tree trunk.

Sure enough, upon the opposite side of the way a tall figure strode swiftly along in the obscurity of the protecting shadows. He moved with the assured air of a man who has definite plans and knows exactly where he is going. Reaching the gate opening into the garden of the mansion opposite to where Bandera and Salvator were hidden, he turned and entered it.

"Do you know whose house that is?" whispered Bandera to his companion.

"Yes; it belongs to Valdez Tierney, son of the Irishman, Maurice Tierney, who was an associate of Juarez and Diaz. He is a malignant Cientifico, and fled the city at our approach."

"The house is empty then?"

"Yes, save for old Pedro Badajoz, the steward and caretaker; for some reason General Villa has issued orders that he is not to be disturbed in possession."

"Humph! General Villa may change his mind if it should turn out Pedro Caretaker is sheltering spies. Come my friend, let us go up the street a little way, cross over, and come down to the gate yonder upon the other side. I fancy we may be able to catch our friend the Gringo—may the vultures pick his carcass!—in a trap."

A few moments later Bandera and Salvator came to the gate. It opened upon an avenue of broad-spreading date palms, the introduction of which into Mexico was a hobby of Valdez Tierney's. Keeping as much as possible in the shadow the pair came presently to a portico of terra-cotta tile and marble which adorned the entrance to the mansion. To reach it they would have to cross a broad space of brilliant moonlight.

"There must be some side entrance where we can get in," whispered Bandera. "If we try it here we run a big chance of being seen."

"Yes, there is a side entrance around here to the right. Come, my Colonel," whispered Salvator, leading the way. This nocturnal adventure in which he was engaged, likely as it was to be pleasing to General Villa, and associated in it as he was with an officer so noted and of such high rank as Bandera, was peculiarly pleasing to the young Lieutenant's imagination; already rosy dreams of promotion and reward, as a result of the friendship of Bandera and the appreciation of Villa, were flitting through his mind.

Traversing a graveled path, lined on either hand by thickets of shrubbery, the pair came presently to another path which intersected it at right angles. "This way," said Salvator, turning to the left. He had hardly taken a step forward, however, in the new direction, when he suddenly crouched down in the thicket beside the path, motioning to Bandera to do the same.

"Por Dios! a close call," whispered the latter, as he crouched beside the Lieutenant.

At the end of the path was a door which had been cautiously opened, and a squat, dark form emerged into the moonlight.

"Pedro, the steward," whispered Salvator.

The squat figure descended half a dozen steps and hurried along the path. As he reached the spot where Bandera and Salvator were crouching, they arose before and behind him and covered him with their revolvers.

"Ah! Dios gracias!" exclaimed the Mexican, recoiling from Bandera's weapon only almost to knock his head against Salvator's, exposing as he did so a most villainous face to the moonlight.

"Where are you going?" asked Bandera, sternly.

"Ah, gracious Heaven; how you frightened me, senors," said the steward, his gargoyle face lighting up with grotesque joy as he saw whom he had encountered. "I swear to you I was going for help, senors; but having met you I need go no farther. There is a Gringo in the house yonder, a malignant desperado, who was a friend of my former master, Valdez Tierney; and he has come here, not knowing that Tierney had fled, seeking to be hidden while he prosecutes some vile plot or other, as I suspect, against our noble chief, General Villa."

"Humph! a plausible story," said Bandera. "Where is this Gringo now?"

"In the patio, eating a very delicious supper of tortillas and tamales and chili with meat which I had prepared for myself—Gringo pig that he is! It was while he was busy crunching my food in his big jaws—may nightmares harry him!—that I slipped away to get help. The swine! he eats like a famished tiger."

"Very well, Pedro," said Bandera, "you have found the help you sought; therefore you will return to where the Gringo is eating, first letting us in the door yonder; and you will engage him in some pleasing conversation—that food of yours would be a good subject—until the Lieutenant here and I can get the drop on him unawares. Do you comprehend?"

"Si, senor, very well I comprehend; and you cannot stop the voracious pig's destruction of my victuals too quickly to suit me," and old Pedro Badajoz, outraged in his tenderest susceptibilities, led the way toward the door from which he had a moment before emerged.

CHAPTER XVII.

TRAPPED.

MEANWHILE, in the patio of the mansion, Red Dick O'Laughlin was seated before a table which fairly groaned beneath the good things Pedro Badajoz had enumerated; not to mention white bread, a fowl, and a bottle of Spanish wine, which Pedro doubtless had forgotten all about. Also, the table groaned—and very likely its owner would have groaned in unison, could he have seen it—beneath the weight of a very fair selection of the Tierneys' plate and cut glass. Red Dick, whom we have seen entering the garden of the mansion from the street, had come upon Pedro just as he was about to begin the discussion of the banquet, having made his entrance into the house by the front door which the epicurean old rascal had forgotten to lock, relying probably upon the known favor in which he stood with General Villa for protection as much as upon bolts and bars. However that may be, he had just tossed off his first glass of Spanish wine, and in so doing had raised his eyes heavenward, when, coming suddenly back to earth, both visually and in a more abstract sense, he was aware of a man standing on the opposite side of the patio regarding him with amused interest. The caretaker's little ferret eyes became like a pair of gimlet holes as he gazed intently at the stranger, his face went white beneath his parchment skin, and the glass he had just drained—worth considerably more than its weight in gold—shivered into a thousand pieces upon the marble floor.

"Hello! Pedro, old boy," said Red Dick, genially, coming forth from the shadow of the arcade, "we're nervous this fine evening it seems; white as a ghost, too. Drat it, man! don't look frightened, I'm not Valdez Tierney."

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For the moment Pedro did not answer, but sank back into the upholstered chair from which he had risen, continuing to regard his visitor intently out of his ferret eyes. Strange tales were told of Pedro Badajoz, tales which concerned a period of his life before he entered the service of Valdez Tierney. One of them referred to a certain knife thrust in the back to which it was said he owed the peculiar favor with which Pancho Villa regarded him. Certainly he looked villainous enough for any treachery. A squat-bodied, wizened, leathery little man he was, tough as a whipthong, with a bald head and aquiline features which, together with his humped shoulders and a neck of extraordinary length, gave him the appearance of a peculiarly loathsome-looking human vulture.

"By ginger!" went on Red Dick, taking no heed of the little man's silence, and glancing around upon the creature comforts with which the table was loaded, "I don't blame you for being a bit startled at my unceremonious entrance; old Valdez would be some peeved if he happened in on you. Faith! I fancy I can see his gray mustaches curl with ire. Say, old boy, where is he, anyway?"

Pedro, having had time to recover from his first fright, no doubt thought it just as well to make the best of what he could not help. His leathery face wrinkled into a horrible grin, which he intended for a gracious smile.

"Ha! upon my soul! is it possible?" he exclaimed with well-feigned surprise, "can it really be the Senor O'Laughlin? I pray you to pardon me, senor, my failure at first to recognize you. I had not seen you for so long, and your entrance was so unexpected."

"Pardon's granted, old top," said Red Dick, bluntly, "though I would have thought my lovely hair would have prevented you from forgetting me so easily. Where's Tierney?"

"Ah, he is away, senor; he left the city when these vile Constitutionalists came. He left me in full charge, senor. When he was going away he said to me, 'Pedro,' he said, 'I leave everything in your care, and if, through the influence I hear you have with Pancho Villa, you can save my house from being looted, when I return I will consider you no longer as my servant, but my friend.' Those very words he said to me, senor, standing there where you stand now; and I have been able, the saints be thanked! to save my master's property from damage through the influence which I owe to a favor I once did for the rebel General, Villa."

"Good work, old boy, very good work; and having saved the whole, you see no harm in enjoying a little part of it, eh?"

Pedro grinned, more villainously than ever. "The senor is pleased to be facetious," he said, "but what can I do, eh? I am lonesome here, with my dear master and his lovely family all away, and so I thought he would forgive the old man for taking a little comfort. But pardon, senor, you have doubtless come far; it is possible you are hungry. I pray you to be seated and to partake of the poor fare I have to offer, while I go search in our cellar to see if I cannot find a bottle of that rare vintage which my master was accustomed to offer only to his most honored guests."

"Now, that is what I call genuine hospitality, and you do not need to offer it twice," said Red Dick, heartily, and suiting the action to the word by seating himself in the upholstered chair Pedro had quitted. "I am sure hungry, for I have ridden fifty miles without breaking my fast since morning."

"And from what direction, may I ask, has the senor come?" said Pedro, ingratiatingly, at the same time shooting at his guest a furtive glance of indescribable treachery.

"From the north," answered the latter, his mouth already full of chicken, "and by the bye, Pedro, could you manage to hide me here for a day or two? I am in Chihuahua upon an errand of some danger."

"Nothing easier, senor; no one ever comes here to interfere with old Pedro, thanks to General Villa's protection, who is really not so black as he is painted."

"Good!" said Red Dick, attacking another piece of chicken, "that suits me fine. This is a mighty tender chicken, Pedro, and, oh, by the way, Pedro, you were saying something about a rare old vintage, and that rare old vintage stuff sounds mighty good to a man whose drink for the last four days has been nothing but water of poor quality, vintage mostly of the desert."

"Oh, certainly, certainly, senor! Pardon my tardiness. I will search for it at once. You will, I am sure, accept my excuses if it should take me a little time; it is a vintage that seldom sees the light of day, and is stored down deep in the lower cellar."

"Oh, sure," said Red Dick, "and that being the case, I will try a little of this as an appetizer," and he filled and drained a glass of the Spanish wine upon the table.

As Pedro went out he turned and shook his fist at his unbidden guest from the shelter of a tub of aloes.

"Appetizer! appetizer! hear him, ye saints! Does the famished coyote need an appetizer! Name of the devil! Just wait, and I will bring him an appetizer!"

Quite oblivious of his host's apostrophe, and though he knew something of the villainous reputation that man had borne before entering the service of Valdez Tierney, quite unsuspecting, Red Dick continued his meal, doing irreparable damage to old Pedro's victuals. The bottle of Spanish wine disappeared, the chicken was a wreck, tortillas, tamales, chili con carne, suffered dreadful inroads. At last the red-bronze giant reached for a napkin—old Pedro had not spared the Tierneys' costly linen—wiped his lips, and leaning back in the upholstered chair with a contented sigh, began to roll a cigarette. "By thunder!" he remarked, "the old boy's long enough finding that rare old vintage he was bragging about. Oh, well, it will be all the better when it comes. Ah, here he is now."

There was a light step in the patio, and old Pedro appeared. His face as he looked at the devastated table was a study. Between rage and grief the old cormorant could scarcely control himself sufficiently to play the part assigned him. "A-a-thousand pardons, senor," he stammered. "I-I could not—that is, I-I think the last bottle of that a-a-wine I spoke of must have been a-a-drunk."

"Oh, well, it's all right; don't be so put out about it, man," said Red Dick, with the easy indulgence of one who has dined bountifully; "the other was just as good, I reckon, and you can see for yourself that the bottle's empty. Tomorrow—damnation!"

Red Dick leaped to his feet and reached for his revolver. Too late! He was covered on either side by the weapons of Bandera and Salvator.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"HANDS up!" snapped Bandera.

So great was O'Laughlin's native hardihood, made second nature by a life of habitual hazard, that despite his desperate situation, he was able to see in it an element of grim humor, and smiled pleasantly at Bandera as he raised his hands deliberately above his head.

"Faith!" he said, as Bandera unbuckled his cartridge belt with its brace of revolvers, "I am glad you postponed your arrival until after I had finished my supper. Sorry there is so little left to offer you, Colonel, for when I saw you last you were traveling at a pace calculated to breed a good appetite."

Bandera's face turned livid at the taunt, and in his eyes gleamed deadly menace. "You Gringo pig!" he said, "I thank you for reminding me that the blood of my dead comrades yonder cries aloud to Heaven for vengeance. My forefinger is quivering to send your soul to join them, but, por Dios! that would be too easy a death. Besides Pancho Villa wishes to talk with you before you die, and I fancy before the conversation is ended he will find means to take the bravado out of you and make you beg for death to end your misery."

"Threats are safe when you have the man you threaten at your mercy, Quintin Bandera. Did you ever stop to think how often you have threatened me, and still I am alive?"

"You have had devil's luck, that is all; but devil's luck comes to an end at last. Here, Pedro," turning to the caretaker, "see if you can find a rope to tie up this Gringo steer, and see to it that it is a stout one."

"Certainly, my Colonel, certainly," said old Pedro, eagerly, "I know where there is a good stout rope. It is, I think," he added, with a villainous grin at Red Dick, "in that same cellar where a certain old vintage is kept with talk of which I cajoled the Gringo pig so that he should not suspect the true cause of my prolonged absence."

"Nice old boy!" said Red Dick; "but hurry along with that rope, for I see my young friend's arm here is growing tired holding a revolver at my head," and he smiled coolly at Salvator, whose arm, in truth, was beginning to tremble with the strain of keeping his revolver leveled. The young Lieutenant blushed like a schoolboy at the taunt, and lowering his weapon, looked wonderingly at this man who seemed devoid of a sense of fear.

"Ha! what are you doing there?" said Bandera, hastily. "Have a care that he does not catch you off your guard. He is as strong as a bull and as tricky as a coyote."

Salvator leveled his weapon again, his respect for the prisoner increased, if that were possible.

"Ah," went on Bandera, "here is Pedro with the rope. Now we shall have him safe."

"Pedro," said Bandera, a few moments later, "are there any horses left in the stables? We've got to carry this fellow some distance from here."

Red Dick, his arms bound to his sides, was seated in the upholstered chair in which he had enjoyed his supper.

"No, my Colonel, my former master, the malignant, took them all when he fled; but there is an automobile, an old and rickety thing, it is true, but I doubt not it would serve the purpose if you do not have to go too far."

"Good! the very thing; and can you run it, Pedro?"

"Oh, yes, my Colonel, among other things my former master made me learn was to run one of those devil wagons."

Pedro dwelt always with peculiar satisfaction upon the phrase—"my former master."

"Very well, Pedro, get it ready quickly, and bring it around to the side door where we entered. We do not want to attract any more attention than necessary."

"Where will you take him?" said Lieutenant Salvator, when Pedro had gone out.

"To the palace; I think the General will forgive us for awakening him when he sees whom we have brought."

"Would not the Casa Oquendo be better, my Colonel? It is there the General confines prisoners whose imprisonment would be likely to embroil him with other countries, particularly the United States; and this fellow's being brought to the palace, infested as it is by newspaper correspondents, who are, in the General's opinion, little better than spies, might prove embarrassing to him, and earn us censure instead of praise."

"Por Dios! boy, you are right. To the Casa Oquendo, then, it shall be. Why doesn't the old rat hurry with the machine?"

Pedro appeared at the moment. In his hand he carried a cane of ebony. "Senors," he said obsequiously, "pardon a poor man like me for making a suggestion, but would it not be better to bind our friend yonder with this stick under his knees? He is desperate and dangerous, and that rope about his arms might work loose."

"A good idea, Pedro," said Bandera, "if you will help us carry him to the machine, for he weighs almost as much as a young steer, the beast."

"Oh, with pleasure, my Colonel, gladly would I help carry him to the gallows."

Within ten minutes Red Dick, trussed like a fowl ready for roasting, was deposited in the bottom of the rickety automobile, with Bandera and Salvator seated in the tonneau on either hand. Pedro cranked up and climbed into the chauffeur's seat, and a little later the animated collection of scrap iron was wheezing and coughing through the moonlit streets toward the Casa Oquendo.

"My Colonel," the officer at the gate of the Casa Oquendo was saying, "I assure you that all of the inner chambers are occupied, and the General has strictly forbidden that one prisoner be lodged with another; but," he went on, glancing at the trussed-up bundle in the automobile, "wouldn't this fellow, bound as he is, be safe enough in one of the outer chambers? It is a high fall from one of the upper windows, even if he were in a position to take so desperate a chance."

"But," said Bandera, still unsatisfied, "if, by the help of the devil, he should get loose and take the chance, is the garden carefully patrolled?"

"Sentries are posted every thirty paces around the whole circuit, and two squads are patrolling constantly," said the officer.

"Very well, then, lodge him in one of the outer chambers, but guard him as you would your right eye; he is worth a hundred thousand pesos in gold to the General if he can make him talk."

"He'll do that all right," said the officer, laughing; "he knows a way. Here Tony, Carlos, Xavier, Pablo, carry that bundle into the house and up to the second chamber facing this way. Sergeant, see that the Gringo is safely lodged—or, no, better, I will see to it myself. Good night, my Colonel," and the officer, saluting Bandera and Salvator, followed the four soldiers who were carrying Red Dick into the Casa Oquendo.

(Continued next week.)

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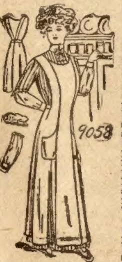

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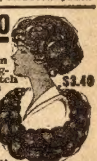

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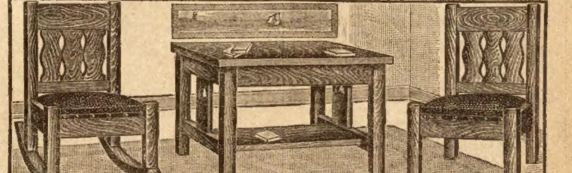

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Or, One Woman's Fate

By Annie Brownlee Quimby

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Begun in No. 34, August 22. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE weeks wore into months, yet Lady Betty would not relent, and Count Hoffman was seen with her more and more frequently. At last, in a fit of desperation and despair, Sir Richard sought her in her rooms. He was most unwilling to break with her entirely, because she happened to be the only woman of whom he had never tired—the only woman who could charm and amuse him at all times.

And now, with a determination worthy of a better cause, he decided to put his fate to the test, bound to know whether the rumor of her approaching marriage was really true. He called at an early hour, hoping to find her alone; and was shown into a dainty little parlor.

A few minutes later Lady Betty entered. He had sent up no card, and she had no idea who her visitor might be. When she saw Sir Richard, her dark eyes flashed angrily.

"So you have come, then, despite my orders that you should not," she said coldly.

"Yes, I have come. Forgive me, Betty, if I have done wrong; but I could not stay away. I heard you were going to marry the Count. I came to ask you if it is so?"

"Well, supposing it is so!" was the indignant reply.

"You admit the truth of it, then?" he asked grimly.

"I admit or deny nothing. But as far as you and I are concerned, we must henceforth be strangers."

"Have a care, Betty! We have been too much to each other in the past to ever be that. I have sacrificed too much for your sake to submit meekly to be thrown aside like a broken toy; and see another in the place where I should be."

"You threaten me?" she asked mockingly. "You forget that your wife is still your wife, despite your efforts to have it otherwise. You are insane. You, a married man, speaking as though you were eligible for matrimony!"

"My wife was still my wife months ago, and you were aware of the fact. Yet you encouraged me by every art known to your sex. I tell you, you shall never be the wife of Count Hoffman. I shall prevent it, even at the very altar!" he cried, with rising anger.

"Don't excite yourself unnecessarily," Lady Betty replied, with provoking coolness. "I shall act as I deem best for myself. I have my future life to think of, and you know, you very nearly ruined my character. My one desire now is to regain my good name and former position in society. So you will excuse me if I ask you to make your call as brief as possible."

"My God, Betty! Why did you not think of all that months ago? It is too late now. You led me on and encouraged me by every device your scheming brain could conceive, and now you shall not throw me over. I cannot and will not give you up! So beware!"

Her dark, brilliant face paled a shade or two, but she answered steadily enough:

"You're a fool, Dick! You have a wife already. Do you suppose I am going to waste my life waiting for the freedom that may never be yours? If you do, you are a greater fool than I took you for. It was most unfortunate that you called this morning," she added coldly. "You will oblige me in the future by not doing so again."

As she ceased speaking, she moved toward the door, as though to leave the room. He sprang up and grasped her arm.

"Good heavens, Betty! You don't, you can't mean it?" he cried stupidly.

"You will find that I do mean it!" was the sharp retort.

"Merciful Heaven!" he cried wildly. "Was it for this I ruined my home, and broke my wife's heart?"

His voice was full of such pathos and despair as is seldom wrung from a human heart. In that moment he tasted of the cup from which Dorothy and Max Eager had drunk to the very dregs. Perhaps the bitterness of his draught was even greater than theirs, for there was always an accusing conscience to whisper in his ear.

"You, also, should have thought of all that months ago," she said tauntingly.

For a moment he looked at her with teeth clinched and face twitching.

"I could find it in my heart to kill you!" he hissed. "But remember, if ever you wed the Count, or any other man, I shall take your worthless life if I have to follow you to the end of the earth to do it."

Picking up his hat, he hurriedly left the room, and ran into the tall, lank form of Count Hoffman, sending that nobleman's hat flying in one direction and its owner in another. He did not pause to ascertain the extent of the injury done, but went striding down the street like one possessed.

The Count, bruised and limp—with a tender spot under his immaculate waistcoat—gathered himself up and wiped the dust from his silk hat with a hand that trembled visibly. His dark, swarthy face was almost purple with indignation, and his dearest wish just then was for a speedy revenge.

Meanwhile, Lady Betty sat in her cozy little parlor. Her dark, handsome face wore a perplexed and anxious look, and for the first time in her life she was afraid of a man's threat. There was something in and about Sir Richard that warned her he was in terrible earnest. Therefore she set her scheming wits to work to devise some plan by which she could effectually rid herself of Sir Richard, before carrying out her contemplated marriage with the Hungarian. While puzzling her brains to devise ways and means, the Count was announced.

Like a flash, the thought crossed her mind: Why not use the Count to rid her of her discarded lover. She knew the Hungarian was as famous for his duels as he was for his card playing.

The Count angrily related his experience at her door, and vowed vengeance on the reckless Englishman.

"But pardon me, madam. Why was he so heedless, so agitated? Surely you had not quarreled?"

"Yes, we did quarrel. He—he is a wretch, a coward! He insulted me dreadfully. Had—had I a husband, or a brother, he should not go unpunished. But I am quite alone, and he knows it, and he dares to insult a friendless woman."

Lady Betty had really contrived to work herself into an agitated, tearful state, that was pitiable to witness.

"Calm yourself, madam. The insult shall be avenged. Sir Richard Melville will answer to me this day for his baseness!" the Count cried, in great anger.

She turned aside, as though to hide the tears, but in reality to hide a smile of triumph. Her plan had succeeded.

"You are too kind, Count, too considerate. I cannot think of involving you in such a thing. Let it pass," she said, with a sigh that might mean so much.

"Pass over an insult to a lady? Never! In Hungary blood alone can atone for such a thing. But I have a favor to crave. Give me the right to protect you, now and always, and never again shall man dare to insult you thus."

For a moment she hesitated—for appearances' sake only—then said:

"Punish Sir Richard for this cruel insult, and you shall have your reward," and she smiled up into the dark, eager face of the Hungarian.

He drew her to his heart, with a fierce, passionate tenderness, and she unresistingly allowed him to kiss her again and again.

"My dear, I promise you the fullest and most perfect revenge," he murmured fondly. "Sir Richard Melville has only a few hours to live," and she smiled her thanks at the dark, sinister face of her tool—smiled at the man she had bidden take a human life to satisfy a cruel caprice.

When Count Hoffman left Lady Betty's apartments, he went straight to his own, and directly dispatched a messenger with a challenge to Sir Richard. When the latter received it, he was at first dumfounded; then a sudden fury seized him. He could recognize the hand of Lady Betty in this, and in his anger he accepted the challenge without a moment's hesitation, and assured the Count's messenger that he should have the desired satisfaction.

When the Hungarian left Lady Betty, there was the light of triumph in her eyes, but not one single thought of pity in her heart for the man whom she had lured to ruin, and perhaps to death. She had never known remorse in all her life, and in her ears the still, small voice of conscience had long ceased to whisper.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MAX EAGER has been traveling about Europe in company with Mr. and Mrs. Douglas for two months. They had come to Paris for a week or two before the Douglases returned to England. On the way to their hotel, their attention was arrested by the newsboys calling their wares. People were buying the papers, and discussing some particular piece of news in excited little groups. Evidently something unusual had occurred. A ragged little newsboy came running toward them, waving a paper in his hand, and crying:

"All about the duel! Sir Richard Melville dying! Count Hoffman and Lady Betty Rutledge have fled!"

"Good heavens! Sir Richard dying!" Mrs. Douglas cried, horrified. "Get a paper, Max."

Max signed to the driver to stop, snatched a paper from the urchin, threw him a coin, and they rattled on again. In flaring headlines they read:

"Sir Richard Melville fatally wounded in a duel with Count Hoffman. Lies at St. Mary's Hospital. No hopes entertained for his recovery. Count Hoffman and Lady Rutledge have fled."

Max read no more, but with a white, drawn face, handed the paper to Mrs. Douglas and her husband.

"So she has tired of him, then! I half expected she would!" Mrs. Douglas exclaimed.

"Horrible!" Max cried, with a shudder. "To think it should end like that!"

"My dear Max, you could hardly expect it to end otherwise. And I can't say that I find it in my heart to pity him so very much. He treated Dorothy shamefully, disgracefully, and all for the sake of that horrible woman."

"I wonder whether Dorothy is with him?" Max asked.

"I think not. The duel only occurred this morning, it seems. Supposing she had been notified—which is doubtful—she could not have arrived yet."

Mr. Douglas had been eagerly scanning the paper while the others were conversing.

"The best thing we can do, Catherine, will be to drive straight to St. Mary's Hospital and see him if possible. There is no mention here of Dorothy having been notified. He may not be in a condition to give them particulars. I have a conviction that our services will be needed."

"As you wish, dear. I have no love for the man; yet, for Dorothy's sake, I would render any assistance possible. It might be as well for us to call and see."

Twenty minutes' drive brought them to the hospital. The attendant told them that Sir Richard was very low, but he thought perhaps they might be able to see him. He would inquire. A few minutes later, a white-capped nurse conducted Mr. and Mrs. Douglas into a spacious room, where on a spotless cot lay Sir Richard. Max thought it would be more considerate on his part not to accompany them.

It was a very white, haggard face that was turned toward them, and the hand that was feebly extended was cold.

Mrs. Douglas had meant to be distant and reserved, but at sight of his pale, pinched face and his terrible suffering, her coldness and reserve melted away, and she thought only of the agonizing pain he was enduring. She took one cold hand between her own, and two or three glistening drops fell upon it.

"It is very good—of you to come," said Sir Richard, brokenly. "I don't deserve such—kindness—such consideration."

"We have only just arrived, and—and hearing of your condition, came straight here. Is there anything we could do for

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Well, I didn't like that. I was afraid the horse wasn't "all right" and that I might have to whistle for my money if I once parted with it. So I didn't buy the horse although I wanted it badly. Now this set me thinking.

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And I said to myself, lots of people may think about my Washing Machine as I thought about the horse, and about the man who owned it.

But I'd never know, because they wouldn't write and tell me. You see I sell my Washing Machine by mail. I have sold over half a million that way.

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So, said I to myself, I will do with my "1900 Gravity" Washer what I wanted the man to do with the horse. Only I won't wait for people to ask me. I'll offer first, and I'll make good the offer every time.

Let me send you a "1900 Gravity" Washer on a month's free trial. I'll pay the freight out of my own pocket, and if you don't want the machine after you've used it a month, I'll take it back and pay the freight too. Surely that is fair enough, isn't it?

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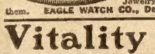

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you; any message we could send?" she inquired anxiously.

"I—I think not," he answered weakly. "My hours are numbered. It will son be over."

"Does Dorothy know?" Mrs. Douglas asked gently.

"Dorothy! My God! I could not ask Dorothy to come to me now. She couldn't—do it, you know!"

"Nevertheless, she would do it. And I am going to ask her to come at once."

"You think she might?" he asked eagerly. "But no, an angel—could scarcely do that—after the way I have treated her."

"Believe me, Sir Richard, Dorothy will come. I know her better than you do," she assured him.

"If I thought she would," he said, scarcely above a whisper, "I would fight death off—till I could look upon her face again."

"Rest assured that she will come. I promise you that."

She never forgot the look of relief that shone in his eyes.

"I will believe it," he said feebly. "And I will not die till I see her again."

Mr. Douglas returned to the carriage, where Max was waiting, and together they drove to the nearest telegraph office, and dispatched a message to Dorothy.

Mrs. Douglas sat by the bedside while they were gone. Sir Richard had sunk into a troubled sleep, in which he moaned restlessly, and in which he seemed to dream that both Dorothy and Lady Betty were with him. After a little, he opened his eyes again, and looked at "Uncle Archie's Wife" entreatingly.

"You will not leave me till she comes?" he pleaded. "I can feel the cold waters of the river of death flowing about me. They are rising higher and higher. It is a comfort, you know, to have a good woman by one's side at a time like this. I can feel that at last."

"I shall not leave you," she answered, with tear-dimmed eyes. "And Dorothy will soon be here."

"You are so kind, so good—and I deserve it so little,' he replied wearily.

Then for a time the eyes were closed, and she thought he was sleeping again, but he was not.

"Do you think Dorothy will ever forgive me?" he asked faintly. "I have been such a brute! I have neglected her—outraged her. I have forfeited all claim to her consideration—or respect. Do you think human nature—can forgive such a wrong? I wish now I had acted differently."

"Yes, I believe Dorothy will forgive you freely," she assured him. "Dorothy is not of the common sort. She can rise to a height that we poor mortals could not."

"And I have been so blind. I chose the gilding and tinsel instead of the pure gold. I did not value a good, pure woman until that she-devil, that imp of hell, made me see the difference. Then it was too late to reform or atone."

The hours of the night dragged wearily by, and another day dawned. It was apparent to all that Sir Richard could not live many hours longer. He battled desperately with the numbness that was creeping over him.

"I will not die, I cannot die, till I see her again!" was his constant cry.

"Dorothy will soon be here now," Mrs. Douglas assured him. "I know she will lose no time, but she cannot arrive before morning."

"I pray God she may come in time!" was constantly on his lips. "Ah, Mrs. Douglas, you don't know how bad I have been! But at a time like this, when we draw near to death, we see things as they actually are—naked and undisguised. Had I my life to live over again, how different it would be," he half whispered pitifully.

"None of us is as good as he might be, Sir Richard. I dare say, could we live our lives over again in the light of past experiences, we would no doubt steer clear of the rocks and shoals that have been our destruction. But that cannot be. God wills it otherwise," she answered, with sweet solemnity.

A door in a distant part of the hospital shut softly. There was a faint, almost inaudible, sound of voices. Sir Richard turned his dying eyes toward Mrs. Douglas, and in their depths was the brightness of hope.

"That is Dorothy. Thank God she has come in time! Do you know, Mrs. Douglas, that is the first time in my life I have ever thanked God for anything," he whispered, in an awed voice.

Footsteps were coming along the corridor, and Mrs. Douglas went out to meet Dorothy.

"I am not too late?" she asked anxiously.

"No, dear, he is still living, but the end is very near. He has been asking for you constantly. Go to him at once, dear."

Mrs. Douglas and her husband withdrew to a little waitingroom across the hall that the meeting between husband and wife might be alone.

A half-hour passed in silence, then the door opened and Dorothy beckoned Mrs. Douglas to her side.

"He wants to see Max," she said tearfully. "Will you ask him to come?"

Max came and knelt by the dying man's couch.

"What is it, Sir Richard? Is there anything I can do for you?" he asked.

"Yes, there is a favor I would—ask of you. I don't think it will be hard for you to promise to grant it," he said, with a weak smile. "I am going to give into your keeping—the greatest treasure the world can hold—that of a pure and noble woman. I want you to promise me—that you will take care of Dorothy. Hush! Don't speak. I have no strength to waste," he cried impatiently. "I want you to promise me you will take care of Dorothy and after a few months, when the grass grows green, and the flowers are blooming over my grave, you will make her your wife." He groped about the coverlet till he found one of Max's hands, which he clasped in his own cold ones. "Promise me?" he asked eagerly.

"I promise," Max replied, in a husky voice. "But you may recover yet."

"No, I shall not," Sir Richard responded. "The only honorable thing I have ever done in life will be to leave it. Even my death cannot entirely atone for the suffering I have willfully caused Dorothy and yourself."

"Don't!" Max cried, with emotion. "We will not think of that now. It is past and gone."

"It is very good of you to—speak like that now," he whispered, with gratitude. "I won't ask you to forgive me; men don't forgive—as readily as women." Here he paused for breath. The sands of life were nearly run. "But in the years to come—when you and Dorothy are happy together—you will think less hard of me?"

"I forgive you fully, Sir Richard. My own life has not been entirely blameless."

"I don't think it is man's nature to forgive so easily, Max. Just now you are sorry for me—but after a little a bitter feeling will—creep up against me—for having spoiled so many of the best years of your life."

"My forgiveness is complete and entire. There is too much wrongdoing and evil in my own life for me to sit in judgment upon you or any other man. You will believe that, won't you?" Max entreated.

"I will try," Sir Richard whispered faintly, "but I don't pretend to understand. I could never forgive like that."

For a moment all was still in that chamber of death; then the dying man shuddered, and his breath came in quick, short gasps.

"Dorothy," he gasped, "give me your hand. All is dark—and cold—and chill. The waters—of the river of—death are flowing over me. Hold my hand tighter—tighter—you are—slipping away from me. God bless you—and forgive!"

The eyelids fluttered for a moment. There was a short, sharp struggle for breath, then all was calm and still, and Sir Richard Melville had passed to the life beyond.

CHAPTER XXV.

A YEAR had passed since Sir Richard had been laid in his last resting-place. Dorothy was again in London—not at her mother's house, but at Lady Althea's. She had changed her heavy mourning for that of a less somber hue. Beside her sat Max Eager, his dark, handsome eyes upon her face.

"You will marry me at once, won't you dear?" he asked. "He only asked us to wait till the grass was green, and the flowers blooming over his grave. They have been there many months now. You will not delay our happiness longer? Say when it shall be?" He spoke with a lover's eagerness.

"Whenever you wish," she replied, her head resting on his shoulder in perfect trust.

He folded her to his breast, and kissed her passionately again and again.

"Oh, my dear," he whispered lovingly, "I am glad we were strong in the midst of temptation. There will be no remorse, no bitter regrets, to cloud our happiness. Oh, Dorothy, after all, God has been good to you and me," he ended reverently.

"Yes, Max, God has rewarded us abundantly. Our happiness will be all the sweeter because we have tasted of sorrow and temptation."

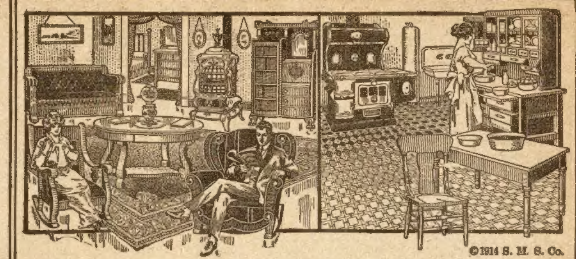
"My darling! It was you who taught me to be brave, and resist temptation. I was rebellious and willful, but you made me see the right."

They were sitting together, talking

(Continued on page fourteen.)

Something to Be Thankful For.

The stories of thousands made homeless by the war in Europe touch the hearts of people in the United States. The home owner in this country when thinking of the sad condition of Belgians, and Austrians particularly, breathes a prayer of thanksgiving for the freedom of American homes from pillage and destruction. A further cause of congratulation is that in this country there is no bar to home lovers securing everything they need for home furnishing, whether necessities or luxuries, while in Europe, even though homes may be still standing and uninjured, their owners suffer deprivations in having all supplies cut off. Readers of THE CHICAGO LEDGER can find in its advertising columns almost anything in the line of home furnishings, which they can secure by merely writing a letter.



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Too Busy.

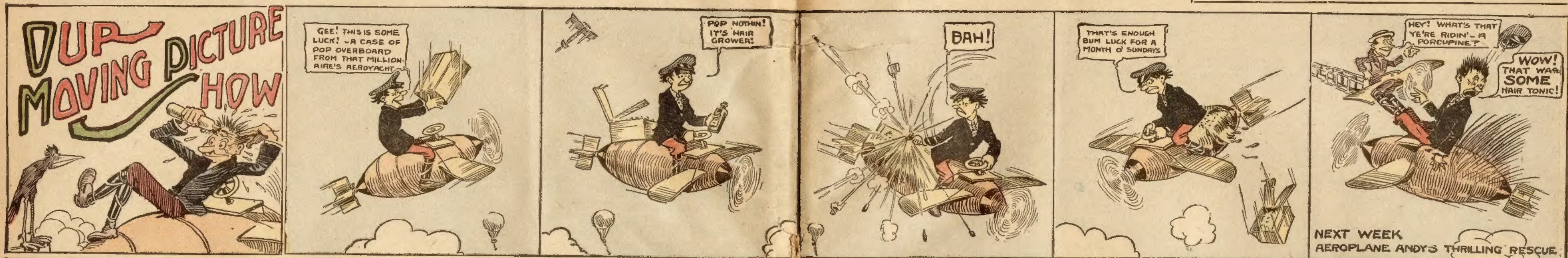
"De man dat insists on tellin' all he knows," said Uncle Eben, "keeps hisself so busy talkin' dat he don't git a chance to git much real infohmation."

What Did She Mean?

Little Brother—"Bet he'd kiss you if I weren't here!"

Sister—"You insolent boy! Go away this very minute!"

Aeroplane Andy's Adventures


DUP MOVING PICTURE SHOW
GEE! THIS IS SOME LUCK! -A CASE OF POP OVERBOARD FROM THAT MILLIONAIRE'S AEROYACHT
POP NOTHIN! IT'S HAIR GROWER!
BAH!
THAT'S ENOUGH BUM LUCK FOR A MONTH O' SUNDAYS
HEY! WHAT'S THAT YE'RE RIDIN' - A PORCUPINE?
WOW! THAT WAS SOME HAIR TONIC!
NEXT WEEK
AEROPLANE ANDY'S THRILLING RESCUE.

Misjudged Him.

"Your husband, madam, is suffering from voluntary inertia."

"Poor fellow! And here I've been telling him he's just lazy."

In China.

Think of hearing Central ask: "What can the insignificant one do to serve the exalted master?" Well, that's "What number, please?" over in Peking.

Both Coming and Going.

Pat was standing near the car track when he noticed an automobile coming up the street, and to be safe he stepped back a little.

The auto went past, and, just as it was passing, the driver had occasion to turn off the track. When he did, the auto skidded on the track, causing the back end of it to swing around, striking Pat and knocking him down.

Pat was seen to get up and look after the car and say. "Now phat do ye think o' that? Whin ye stand in front o' thim, they run over ye and whin ye git out o' the way to let thim pass, they turn around and kick ye."

Surprising.

A lady, returning home unexpectedly, found her domestic using the drawing-room for the purpose of giving a select party to her friends. "Ann, I am surprised!" she ejaculated.

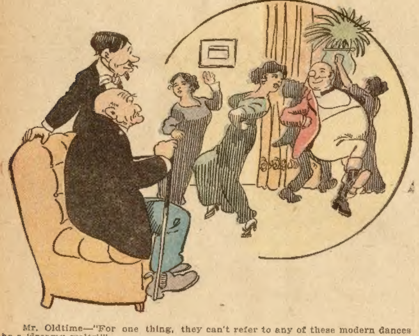
"So am I, ma'am," replied the unabashed girl. "I thought you wouldn't be back for a fortnight."

Feminine Ignorance.

"My dear, I would like to know something."

"What is it, dear?"

"Can you get good scrubbing brushes, too, at these bucket shops downtown?"



Mr. Oldtime—"For one thing, they can't refer to any of these modern dances as a 'dreamy waltz'!"

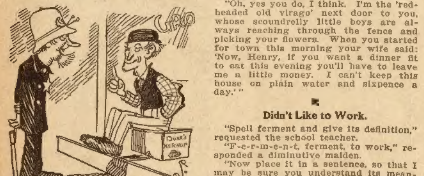
Mr. Fogy—"Oh, I don't know. They seem to me like nightmares."

Hardly Possible.

"Sam, I understand there's a schism in your church," said the jocular man to his colored man-of-all-work.

"Kain't be, 'less'n somebody done made us a present of it, 'cause we done spent all ouah money foh a new ohgan."

* * *



Town Policeman—"Did them city cousins mean it when they said you had a standin' invitation to visit 'em?"

Bill Timseed—"I guess so. They never once asked me to set down."

Did He Know?

"But I don't know you, madam," the bank cashier said to the woman who had presented a check.

The woman, however, instead of saying haughtily, "I do not wish your acquaintance, sir," merely replied, with an engaging smile:

"Oh, yes you do, I think. I'm the 'redheaded old virago' next door to you, whose scoundrelly little boys are always reaching through the fence and picking your flowers. When you started for town this morning your wife said: 'Now, Henry, if you want a dinner fit to eat this evening you'll have to leave me a little money. I can't keep this house on plain water and sixpence a day.'"

Didn't Like to Work.

"Spell ferment and give its definition," requested the school teacher.

"F-e-r-m-e-n-t, ferment, to work," responded a diminutive maiden.

"Now place it in a sentence, so that I may be sure you understand its meaning," said the teacher.

"In summer I would rather play out of doors than ferment in the schoolhouse," returned the small pupil with such doleful frankness and unconscious humor that the teacher found it hard to suppress a smile.

No Wonder.

"I used to go to the theater just as a tired business man would."

"Why did you give it up?"

"I found that it was the plays that were making me tired."

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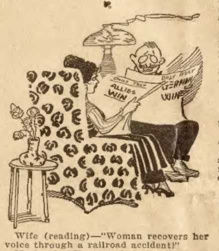


Wife (reading)—"Woman recovers her voice through a railroad accident!"

Husband—"How much is her husband suing the company for?"

No Trouble to Tell.

At a recent dinner in a suburban district, where all the guests were amateur chicken raisers, after a discussion of the egg problem the conversation turned to the best breed of hens. After the good points of Orpingtons, Minorcas, Leghorns, Wyandottes and others had all been brought forth, the host said:

"Well, the ultimate end of every chicken is the pot, and you can't tell the difference when it is on the table. Let's see how many can tell what kind of a hen we have just eaten."

"All agreed it was a very good kind, but there were many guesses as to the breed. The only child at the table, a 12-year-old boy, was the one who guessed correctly.

The host beamed on him and said: "Jimmie, how did you know it was a Plymouth Rock?"

"Oh, that was easy," he replied. "I found a feather in the gravy."

Putting On Airs.

Abner—"Silas is the darndest man I ever saw to try to put on a front—to sail under false colors, so to speak."

Hiram—"What's he been doin'?"

Abner—"Why, everybody knows that he never saw the time when he was makin' more'n enough to buy his clothes and tobacker, and yet he stands around town every day and talks till he's red in the face, denouncin' the income tax."—Judge.

No Cause to Kick.

"Is that your mule?' asked the man going fishing.

"Yas sir," said the colored man, who was sitting on a log by the road.

"Does he kick?"

"'Deed, mistuh, he ain't got no cause to kick. He's gittin' his own way right along. I'm de one dat's havin' de worry an' difficulty."

Decidedly Serious.

Father—"Jane, are that young man's intentions serious?"

Daughter—"I think so, pa; he says our carriage shed could easily be transformed into a garage, and he thinks the attic would make a dandy billiardroom and bowling alley."

Easy to Make.

Too many men seem to make resolutions only to break them afterward. They are like Smythe.

When Smythe came home very late on January 2d, a cigar in his mouth and an odor of alcohol about him, his wife said bitterly:

"Only yesterday you swore off late hours, whisky and tobacco, and now—look at you! You've broken all three of your resolutions!"

"Well, dearie, what of it?" said Smythe, in a hurt voice. "I can make others, c-can't I?"

Not a Good Sign.

Mother—"I am afraid Laura will never become a great pianist."

Father—"What makes you so discouraged?"

Mother—"This morning she seemed beside herself with joy when I told her she must omit her music lesson to go to the dentist."—Judge.

His Game.

"Let's play I was grandpa," suggested Tommy.

"All right," answered May.

"Well, then," said Tommy, "you can fan me while I go to sleep."

In Trouble.

Her Mother—"What are you doing to poor dolly, child?"

Child—"I am just going to put her to bed, mummy. I've taken off her hair, but I can't get her teeth out."

Hadn't the Nerve.

A town character who had been in trouble with the police many times was arrested recently on a minor criminal charge. The arresting officer was amazed when the fellow appeared in Police Court with a lawyer prepared to make a defense. His case was called, and the judge asked:

"Prisoner, are you guilty or not guilty?"

"Let my lawyer plead not guilty for me, Judge," was the reply. "I ain't got the nerve."

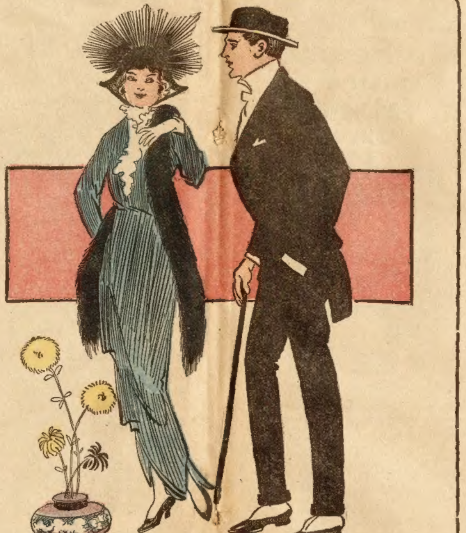
Curious About It.

Mr. Brown had just registered and was about to turn away when the clerk asked:

"Beg pardon, but what is your name?"

"Name!" echoed the indignant guest. "Don't you see my signature there on the register?"

"I do," returned the clerk calmly. "That is what aroused my curiosity."



She—"Reggie has become a great football man since he started that new mustache."

He—"How so?"

She—"It's a touchdown every few minutes with him now."

Feather-brained Wit.

"She is the author of many articles decrying the use of birds and feathers as ornaments for hats."

"One of those nom-de-plume writers, I presume."

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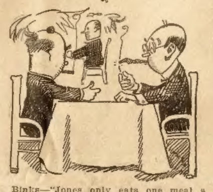


Binks—"Jones only eats one meal a day!"

Winks—"Stomach trouble or automobile?"

Two Rings.

A country gentleman recently had his house fitted with electric bells, and, giving instructions to his servant, he said: "Now, I want you to understand me clearly, Joseph, that when I ring once I want you, and when I ring twice I want Maggie, the housemaid."

The bell rang. Joseph never moved. Presently it rang again, and Maggie hurried to her master, who was very angry.

"Why didn't that rascal Joseph come when I rang for him?" demanded the gentleman.

"Why, sir," answered Maggie, "Joseph was busy reading the paper when he heard the first ring, and he said to me, 'Now, Maggie, wait until the master rings again, and then it will be you he wants.'"

Qualified.

"Professor, I know my son is rather slow, but in the two years that you have had charge of his education he must have developed a tendency in some direction or other. What occupation do you suggest as a possible outlet for his energies, such as they are?"

"Well, sir, I think he is admirably fitted for taking moving pictures of a glacier."

Had His Doubts.

"You're terribly severe in your religion, Donald. I suppose you think we're all going to perdition, and nobody will be saved but you and your minister."

"I'm not so sure o' that," said Donald, thoughtfully. "Ye ken, I whiles has me doots about the minister."

Had Missed Something.

Little Rollo had been reproved for his table manners by papa and mamma. He trained his baby stare on mamma to ask:

"When you was a little girl didn't y'ever dip your jelly roll in coffee?"

"No, my dear," with a tinge of acerbity.

"Y'ot to try it. Gee, it's great!"

Must Be a Reason.

Bill—"They say that Parisians smoke cigarettes made of the leaves of the coffee plant. Many who have tried them prefer them to tobacco cigarettes."

Jill—"There's a reason. Perhaps a man gets more coupons with them."

Other Things.

A learned professor was discussing the boy athlete, and announced that he is prone to set athletics too far above English, mathematics and history. In conclusion, he told of a conversation he had had with a young nephew of his a few days previous.

"William," said he, "I'm glad to hear of your success on the school baseball team; but you must remember that there are other things in life besides baseball."

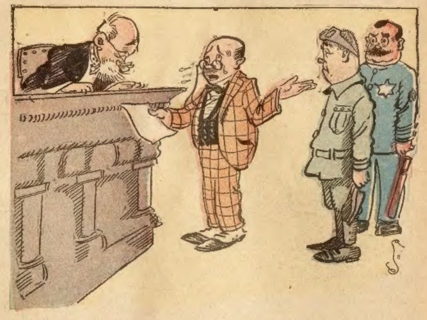
"Yes, Uncle Will," he answered, gravely, "but, hang it all, I'm afraid I'm too light for football or rowing."

Couldn't Catch Him.

Young Albert was a practical youth and everything that he learned at school he endeavored to apply in his daily life and work.

The lad had recently become very friendly with a little boy who had lately moved in that vicinity, and one afternoon his mother asked him if his little playmate was an only child. Whereupon Albert looked very wise and triumphant.

"He's got just one sister," he said. "He tried to catch me when he told me he had two half-sisters, but I guess I know enough about fractions for that."



Lawyer—"Judge, this is the first time this man took an automobile, and he'll never take another."

Rural Judge—"Can't tell. He may steal another and then rob a bank to keep it going."

How He Fooled Her.

A good-for-nothing fellow was asked by his wife to keep awake long enough one day to dig the potatoes in the garden. He consented, and after digging a few minutes he returned to the house and said he had found a coin. He washed the dirt off and it proved to be a sixpence. He put it in his pocket and went back to work. Presently he went to the house and told his wife he had found another coin; this time it was a shilling.

Putting it in his pocket, he said: "I have worked pretty hard; I'll take a short nap."

When he awoke he found that his wife had dug all the rest of the potatoes. But she found no coins. It then dawned upon her that she had been fooled.

How He Managed It.

A tailor with more ingenuity than education had occasion recently to order two large flat irons of the variety known as the "tailor's goose." In some perplexity he scratched his head over the proper plural form to use.

"Two tailors' gooses!" he muttered. "That doesn't sound right at all. Two tailors' geese—that sounds worse yet!"

He puzzled over the question till it began to worry him, but suddenly a bright idea popped into his head. He sat down and wrote:

"Messrs. ——: Please send me one tailor's goose. P. S.—You may send two instead of one."

Clearly Impossible.

"Feyther," said little Mickey, "wasn't it Pathrick Hinry that said, 'Let us have peace'?"

"Niver!" said old Mickey. "Nobody be th' name of Pathrick iver said annything loike thot."

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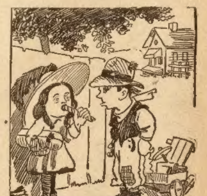
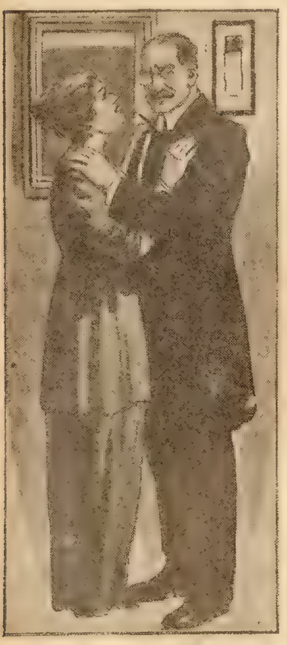


M'rie—"I hear you had an accident an' lost control of your new dog power car."

Jimmie—"Yep. Me engine ketched sight of a cat and 'twas good night."

. . . The . . .
Death Warrant

By Emma Howard Wight



"I want my child!"

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CHAPTER VIII.

GOVERNOR LORING gave a quick glance at the clock as he came into the library. It was four o'clock in the afternoon on the day following, and so far Henry Carter had made no sign. Governor Loring pressed the electric button in the wall, then moving to his desk, he took up the death-warrant and stood looking down upon it.

"It is a dreadful thing to sign away a human life," he murmured, speaking aloud the words of his wife that had haunted him persistently. He dropped the death-warrant upon the desk and moved away. "I have longed for power. I have striven for it. I have acquired it. I thought I was its master. But I am its slave. Cold, relentless, implacable, it calls upon me to do its will, and I must obey."

"You rang, your excellency?"

Governor Loring turned as Marshall came into the room.

"At what time did you tell the messenger to return for the death-warrant, Marshall?" he asked.

"At about eight o'clock, your excellency."

"That is all right."

Marshall lingered.

"It is said, your excellency, that you have shown clemency to James Wilson," he said.

"That is a mistake," declared Governor Loring. "I have not done so."

Marshall shook his head regretfully.

"I am sorry," he murmured.

Governor Loring looked at him quickly.

"Why are you sorry?" he asked.

"I've felt a sort of interest in James Wilson, sir," replied Marshall. "I was hoping right along he'd be cleared."

"Do you not believe him guilty?"

Marshall thought a moment before he replied.

"Perhaps he is, sir. I don't know. There was strong evidence against him."

"And still you did not want him to be convicted. How do you account for that?"

"I can only account for it in one way, sir." He paused.

"Well?"

"I don't know as I ought to say it, sir. There's things I've read in the newspapers about James Wilson that make me think of—Mr. Harry." He glanced in a half-apologetic way at Governor Loring, whose face was imperturbable. "Not meaning no disrespect to Mr. Harry, sir. This here James Wilson has some real nice ways."

Governor Loring turned away rather abruptly.

"If Mr. Carter calls you will find me in the readingroom," he said.

"I wonder how I ever got up courage to speak to him of Mr. Harry," murmured Marshall, as he went out.

Stanley Foster followed his wife into the library.

"Isn't it about time we brought our visit to an end, Sibyl?" he asked. "We have been here for more than a month now. The gubernatorial mansion has its attractions, but I must confess to a longing for my own home." He went nearer to her, speaking softly. "I see so little of you, Sibyl. I want you to myself."

"You should have got over feeling that way after being married for nearly two years," declared Sibyl, cynically.

"I shall never get over feeling that way."

"How absurd!" she exclaimed, with a shrug of her shoulders

"I suppose it is absurd in these days for a man to care for his wife after two years of married life as much as he did the day they were married," he admitted. "But it is nevertheless a fact in my case. I love you with the same intensity, the same passion I did the day you became my wife."

He caught her in his arms, held her close, and kissed her passionately. Then suddenly he put her from him almost roughly.

"God! how cold, how unresponsive you are!" he cried. "You are a woman of ice."

"I cannot feign a responsiveness I do not feel," she said, turning away and sinking rather wearily into a chair. "I am sorry," she went on. "But I cannot help it. You knew when you married me that I did not love you. I did not deceive you. I told you the truth."

He smiled bitterly. "No, you did not deceive me. You were refreshingly frank."

"That being the case, you have no cause of complaint, no right to reproach me. You married me knowing just how I felt toward you."

He looked at her gloomily. "I married you in the belief that I would be able to win your love," he declared. "I told you so at the time."

"And I warned you that you might fail," Sibyl reminded him.

He took a few steps toward her.

"And I have—failed?"

"Yes," she replied.

He came and stood beside her, his hand on the back of her chair.

"Why have I failed?" he asked, looking down upon her strangely. Her eyes sank, she clasped her hands nervously together on her lap. "God knows it is not for want of trying. No man ever tried harder to win a woman's love than I have tried to win yours, Sibyl. You know that?"

"Yes," she replied, in a low voice, "I know it."

"From the moment you became my wife, I have striven with all the power of heart and soul to win your love," he continued. "It was my one purpose. I lived for it. My God! do you know what it means to a man to love a woman as I love you—in vain; to feel her shrink and shudder under his caresses; to hold her fair body in his arms and know that that elusive thing, her soul, ever evades him? It is torture! It is hell!" He walked away from her agitatedly, then turned and spoke more quietly, "Some men would have become disheartened, embittered, and sought consolation elsewhere. I could not do it. It was my fate to love you with a concentration, an entirety that makes even passion for another woman impossible. You are the one woman in the world for me. Your love would crown my life with happiness unspeakable. The one great desire of my life was to win you for my wife. The fulfillment of that desire has turned to ashes on my lips."

"Our marriage was a great mistake," declared Sibyl. "It has brought neither of us happiness."

He glanced at her quickly. "You have been unhappy?" he asked

A wan smile passed over her lips. "Can a woman be happy, married to a man she does not love?" He winced, and she added, quickly, "You asked me the question. I would not have volunteered the information. I have at least tried to conceal from you that I was not happy. I could not hide from you that I did not love you."

"There is a reason why I have failed to win your love." He paused, regarding her attentively, as she shrank under his words. "I think I know what that reason is. You love some one else?" He paused again, but she did not speak. "You love Harry Loring? Answer me! Isn't it so?"

She looked up at him a little defiantly. "Since you will know the truth—yes, I love Harry Loring," she replied.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "I suspected it before we were married."

"And still you wanted to marry me?" exclaimed Sibyl, repelled.

"When I married you, I thought your love for Harry Loring was dead."

"I thought so, too, or I would not have married you," said Sibyl, drearily. "I was destined soon to awaken to the fact that a woman's love does not so easily die."

He gazed at her wonderingly. "You knew all about the profligate life Harry Loring was leading. You knew he was a drunkard, a gambler, a forger. And still you loved him?"

"Despite all that, I loved him," she replied, quietly.

A harsh laugh broke from Stanley's lips. "All that about love having to be founded upon respect is rot, simple rot!" he cried.

"I am afraid it is," said Sibyl, simply.

Stanley was silent for a moment, an odd look on his face.

"So what I did was all in vain," he said, at length. "Wherever Harry Loring may be today, whatever he may have become, whatever he may have suffered, he has triumphed, he is avenged."

Sibyl sat up in her chair and stared at him. "What do you mean?"

"That I proved the undoing of Harry Loring." She arose slowly to her feet, gazing at him. He went on with a sort of dogged determination. "I ruined him. I started him upon the downward path. I placed temptations in his way. I threw him in the way of temptation. I awoke in him the drunkard's craving, the gambler's lust." Sibyl stared at him fascinatedly, a growing horror on her face. "It was I who prompted him to forge his father's name to a check. In one thing I failed. Women had no temptation for him. I lied to you about that."

"Oh, God!" cried Sibyl. "Can a man be so false, so treacherous? It does not seem possible." She turned suddenly upon him. "Why have you told me this? I did not love you, it is true, but I did not despise and hate you as I do now."

"I think I prefer your hatred to your cold indifference," he replied.

"Oh, how could you do it?" she cried, her voice broken and tremulous. "He loved you, trusted you, believed in you. And you betrayed him. No woman's love can compensate for the loss of a friend's affection, loyalty, and fidelity."

"I am beginning to believe that that is true," declared Stanley, thoughtfully.

"You do not expect me to live with you after what you have told me?"

He shrugged his shoulders wearily. "You can do as you please," he replied. "I shall not oppose you if you wish to get a divorce. Almost any plea will do nowadays." He went toward the door. "Try incompatibility of temper." He laughed bitterly and went out.

"He is worse than Judas!" murmured Sibyl. "Oh, Harry, my darling, how cruelly you have been used! You loved me! I know you loved me. I shall procure a divorce from Stanley Foster, and some day perhaps I can atone to you for all you have suffered."

At that moment Governor Loring came into the room. Sibyl went quickly to meet him.

"Oh, Uncle Andrew, I have something to tell you!" she cried.

He glanced at her questioningly. She was pale and her breath came quickly. He saw that she was laboring under some strong emotion. He led her to a chair.

"Sit down, Sibyl," he said. "Something has upset you. Calm yourself."

She dropped into the chair. She was all unnerved. Governor Loring took a seat near her, waiting until she was calmer. After a little while she turned to him and said:

"Uncle Andrew, Harry was as much sinned against as sinning."

The words were sufficiently startling, and for a moment Governor Loring's wonderful self-control deserted him. He leaned toward her.

"What do you mean?" he asked hoarsely. For the instant it flashed through his mind that she meant that Harry was innocent of the murder, though the next moment he realized the impossibility of such a thing.

"I mean that Stanley Foster is a Judas," said Sibyl. "He betrayed his friend. He planned and schemed to ruin Harry, and he succeeded." And she went on to tell him all that Stanley Foster had told her.

Governor Loring listened quietly. "It was a base and treacherous thing to do," he declared, when she had finished. "It was cruel and cowardly, for he took advantage of another's affection, trust, and confidence to betray him."

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"Now you know that Harry was not to blame," exclaimed Sibyl.

He looked at her keenly. "I do not admit that."

At that moment Henry Carter came into the room. Governor Loring arose quickly to his feet, his eyes fixed upon him. Henry wore his overcoat and hat. He looked pale, very tired, and he was grave to dejectedness.

Sibyl arose. Governor Loring seemed to have forgotten her presence. She hesitated a moment, and then passed quietly out of the room.

CHAPTER IX.

HENRY CARTER placed his hat on a chair near the door and came slowly forward. For a moment the two men looked at each other silently. If Governor Loring felt any emotion, his strong will kept it in subjection. He was the first to speak.

"Well?" he questioned

A faint smile, which had a touch of bitterness, crossed the lawyer's tired face

"Do you need to question?" he said. "Do I look like a man who has succeeded?"

"You mean that you have failed?"

Henry Carter gravely inclined his head. "Yes," he replied.

"You have nothing new to advance worthy my consideration?" queried Governor Loring.

"I have nothing new to advance," replied Henry. "I did not expect to have. I had but one hope—to induce Harry to tell where was on the night the murder was committed. But I have failed. I thought that he might yield when I told him you had refused to show him clemency even though you knew the—truth. When I told him he turned hastily away, but not before I saw that there were tears in his eyes." Henry paused for a moment to steady his voice. "I pleaded with him," he continued. "I told him that to prove an alibi was his only hope of escaping the electric chair. But it was no use. He is your own son, Andrew. He has a will of iron."

"As I said to you before, Henry, this alibi business is merely a theory of yours," declared Governor Loring. "You seem to hold to it stubbornly despite the fact that there is absolutely nothing to support it."

Henry turned and looked at him steadily. "So you believe him guilty?" he said.

"I see no reason for calling into question the verdict of the jury that found him guilty," was the quiet answer.

"My God!" cried Henry, "you can reason about it in that cold-blooded manner? He is your son, Andrew. Save him! Save him whether he be guilty or not guilty. You will do it? You will not refuse?"

"I am compelled to refuse," replied Governor Loring. "You know my reason, so it is useless to go into the matter again."

There was a moment's silence, then Henry spoke. "You intend to sign the death-warrant which consigns your son to the electric chair?"

"I intend to sign the death-warrant in my capacity as Chief Executive of Massachusetts," was the calm answer.

"May God forgive you!" said Henry, solemnly. He took up his hat and went toward the door. Suddenly he stopped and looked back at Governor Loring. "When you were elected Governor, Andrew," he continued, "I think I was the proudest, happiest man in this State." He paused a moment. "I little thought the day would come when I would wish with all my heart and soul that you had never been made Governor. That unhappy boy is your son. But I believe he would have fared better at the hands of a stranger than he has at yours."

He turned and went out. For a moment Governor Loring stood motionless, his head bowed upon his breast. He lifted his head and looked toward the desk on which was the death-warrant. A pallor swept his face, and drops of sweat glistened on his brow. Then with a supreme effort of will, he walked toward the desk.

He stopped suddenly as Mrs. Loring came into the room.

"I saw Mr. Carter going out the door as I came down the stairs, Andrew," she said. "Did he succeed?"

"No."

"And James Wilson will go to the electric chair?"

"Yes."

"His poor mother!" murmured Mrs. Loring, with infinite compassion. "I am not the only unhappy mother in the world." Governor Loring looked at her quickly, a startled glance. "Oh, why does God give women children," she cried, passionately, "and permit our hearts to be wrung through them?"

Governor Loring lifted his hand with a protesting gesture.

"Marian!"

"I have been silent for two years, but I can be silent no longer," she continued unheedingly. "I must speak or I shall go mad or die. I want my child. The child I brought into the world, suckled at my breast, the only child God gave me. I love him more than my life. I cannot live any longer without him. Perhaps you think because I have been silent these two years, I have not suffered. There has not been a day, an hour, during those two miserable years that I have not sorrowed and yearned for my child. I have smiled when my heart was breaking. I am the wife of the Governor, but I envy the poorest, lowliest, humblest woman in this State who can put her arms about the neck of her son and call him her own. Andrew," stretching out her arms appealingly to him, "give me back my son."

He drew back from her, and the words came slowly from his lips.

"I—cannot."

"Oh, Andrew, you will not be so relentless, so pitiless! For whatever wrong he has done, he has been sufficiently punished, he has more than atoned. If you have no pity for him, have pity upon me, and forgive him. I cannot bear the separation from my child any longer. Oh, if you could see him, I know you could not help pitying him."

Governor Loring started.

"Have you seen him?" he asked quickly.

She looked at him steadily, sadly, and slowly inclined her head.

"Yes, I have seen him."

"When? Where?"

"Last summer when we were at Nahant," she replied. "It was the evening of the nineteenth of July. What is it, Andrew?" for a look came into his face that half frightened her.

Almost instantly, however, he recovered himself and spoke quietly.

"The nineteenth of July. Are you sure it was on that night?"

She smiled a tremulous, tender smile.

"Ah, yes, it was my birthday. That was why he came."

A sudden spasm of pain quivered over Governor Loring's face

"Come and sit down." He took her hand and led her gently to a chair. "Now tell me all about it," he said, seating himself near her.

"I was sitting on the terrace overlooking the sea," she began.

"One moment," he interrupted her. "Do you know what the hour was?"

"It was between nine and ten o'clock," she replied.

He drew a sharp breath. "Go on," he said.

"The moon was shining brightly. I saw the figure of a man on the beach below. He stopped at the steps leading up from the beach to the terrace. He ascended the steps. I saw that he carried a large bunch of roses." A sob caught her breath for the moment. "I watched him as he came toward me. He was looking toward the house and had not seen me. He came nearer. Then I recognized him, and my heart seemed to stop beating for the moment. It was Harry. I got upon my feet and ran toward him, calling his name. He stopped, looking at me in a startled way. Then his face changed. 'Mother!' he cried. 'Mother!' The next moment I was in his arms, clinging to him, calling his name, sobbing words of tenderness." She stopped, her breath coming in sobs.

Governor Loring waited until she had grown calmer. "And then?" he queried, gently.

"I made him come and sit beside me on the bench. He laid the roses on my lap. 'I was going to leave them at the house for you,' he said. 'It is your birthday. You know I always gave you roses on your birthday.' I took the roses and pressed them to my lips and bosom. He intended leaving them and going away without being recognized. I questioned him in regard to himself. He told me he had been working in a factory. Oh, he is so changed, so pale, so worn, so thin! And he was shabbily dressed and looked so poor. I thought my heart would break as I looked at him. Oh, my darling! my child! my poor boy!"

She wrung her hands, weeping, and again he waited for her to grow calm.

"He told me that he had kept the promise he made me the night he went away, that he had never in those two years touched a card or drank a drop of liquor. His life has been joyless and bitterly hard. He is poor and alone." She looked at him piteously. "Oh, Andrew, if you have ceased to love him, surely you cannot help but pity him. If suffering atones for wrongdoing, then he has more than atoned. I am sure God has forgiven him. Will you be less merciful?" Governor Loring arose suddenly and walked away from her. "He has hurt your pride, disappointed and humiliated you. But he is your son, the child God gave us in our youth, in the flower of our love. Forgive him!" She arose and took a step toward him. "Take him back. Give him a chance to redeem the past. Andrew, my husband, forgive our child."

"I do—forgive him."

A long, long sigh left Mrs. Loring's lips. She lifted eyes and hands heavenward.

"Dear God!" she cried. "Thou hast at last heard my prayer!"

He went to her, took her gently in his arms, and kissed her upon the forehead.

"You shall have your son," he said.

She looked up into his face with shining eyes.

"Oh, Andrew, you have made me the happiest woman in the world," she said. "We must make up to Harry for all that he has suffered."

"Yes, we must make up to him for all that he has suffered," repeated Governor Loring, as he gently released her.

As Mrs. Loring turned to leave the room, Henry Carter entered. She looked at him with a bright smile as she passed him. He stood for a moment motionless, staring after her, then he turned slowly to Governor Loring with something like horror in his eyes.

"My God! how happy she looks!" he cried.

"Yes, happier than she has looked for two years," said Governor Loring, quietly.

"God have mercy upon her!" ejaculated Henry Carter.

"I am glad you have returned, Henry," said Governor Loring.

"I came back, Andrew, because I could not part from you in anger," declared Henry. "Give me your hand, old friend, and let us part as we have lived for forty years, in friendship."

He held out his hand. Governor Loring took it in his and laid his other hand affectionately on Henry's shoulder.

"Part? What do you mean, Henry?" he asked.

"I am going away. To remain here is impossible. I do not know when I shall return. It will probably be years." He looked into Governor Loring's face with tired, sad eyes. "Andrew, in my eyes you could do no wrong till now. And the greatest wrong you are doing is against—yourself."

"Henry, I shall not sign that death-warrant."

Henry started and looked at him quickly, questioningly.

"You mean that you will show clemency?" he asked, eagerly.

"The innocent have no need of clemency," said Governor Loring.

"The innocent? You believe him innocent?"

"I know him to be innocent. You were right about the alibi. One has been established."

"By—whom?" queried Henry, almost breathlessly.

"By the one who loves him best in all the world—his mother." And he went on to tell Henry all that he had learned from Mrs. Loring.

"Harry is saved, oh, thank God! thank God!" cried Henry, brokenly, as Governor Loring finished, and he sank upon a chair sobbing like a woman.

Governor Loring walked to the desk, picked up the death-warrant, tore it in several pieces, and dropped them into the waste basket. When he returned Henry had recovered his composure.

"Now you know why he refused to tell where he was the night the murder was committed," he said, rising. "To prove an alibi he would have to proclaim to the world that James Wilson, a poor factory hand, who had been tried for murder, was Harry Loring, the son of the Governor. Your honor, Andrew, your high position in the eyes of men were dearer to him than his life. To keep them stainless he would have gone, innocent, to the electric chair. I am proud of that boy! God bless him!"

"And, now, it must be proclaimed to the world that he is my son," declared Governor Loring, quietly.

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A shadow fell across Henry's face. "If there were only some other way," he murmured.

CHAPTER X.

AS THE words left Henry Carter's lips, Stanley Foster came quickly into the room, his bearing showing traces of excitement.

"Ah, Mr. Carter, I am glad to find you here," he exclaimed. "I was just going to try to get you over the 'phone."

Henry turned to him questioningly. Governor Loring's brows contracted, and his face grew stern. A storm of resentment and indignation swept over him.

"I wanted to tell you, Mr. Carter," continued Stanley, "that your client, James Wilson, is innocent."

Both men gazed at him for a moment in startled silence.

"How do you know that?" asked Henry, after he had recovered himself.

"The real murderer has confessed," declared Stanley.

"What?" cried Henry.

"I will tell you about it," continued Stanley. "About an hour ago I was walking along Boylston street, and saw a man struck by an automobile. I was near at the time and helped to carry him into a drug store. He had been fatally injured and was dying. He was conscious, and gave his name as Thomas Finnan."

Henry Carter started. "The man I always suspected," he exclaimed.

"Your suspicions were correct," declared Stanley. "He killed George Burks. He confessed the murder to me before he died."

"To you?" exclaimed Governor Loring, looking at him strangely.

"Yes. I remained after he was carried into the drug-store, and was alone with him for a short while. He was dying fast, and he knew it. He told me that he wanted to make a confession before he died. I wrote down what he said and had the druggist witness his signature. He died before the physician arrived."

"And it will be through you that the innocence of James Wilson is established?" said Governor Loring, in an odd voice.

"Yes," replied Stanley, with a whimsical shrug of the shoulders. "And I was so sure the fellow was guilty."

The eyes of Governor Loring and Henry Carter met.

Each read the thought of the other—a great thankfulness that it was no longer necessary to prove an alibi.

The End.

* * *

Sold at Auction

(Continued from page nine.)

earnestly of the past, when Lady Althea entered. Her sharp eyes took in the situation at a glance, and she smiled happily and extended a hand to each.

"When is it going to be?" she asked. "I had begun to think you two had grown tired of each other," she laughed, opening a paper and spreading it on her knee. "I came across an item today that I think will interest us all. It is in regard to Lady Betty. That unfortunate woman has ended her career of evil by committing suicide. It seems the Count carried her away to his estate in Hungary, and there kept her a prisoner. There was no escape, and, galled, fretted, heartbroken, and despairing, she threw herself into a lake and was drowned."

For several seconds there was absolute silence. Then Dorothy looked up, and her eyes were dim with unshed tears.

"Poor misguided soul!" she said pityingly. "Her punishment was great."

"Yes," the other replied softly. "Truly the wages of sin is death."

The End.

* * *

Lucky Billy.

"I wish," sighed Freddie plaintively, "I wish I was Billy Smith."

"Why, Freddie!" said his astonished mother, "Billy Smith has none of the nice things you have. He doesn't get any pocket money, and he isn't as big as you, and he's not nearly so strong. His father never buys him presents or——"

"I know all about that, mamma," said Freddie, "but——"

"And think what nice books you have. And you never have to go out in the cold and wet to carry papers and——"

"I know," grumbled Freddie, annoyed by his mother's strange lack of understanding. "But Billy kin wiggle his ears!"

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Electric signs let out some brilliant remarks.

Many a man's settled ways are settled by his wife.

It takes more than hot air to kill the germ of suspicion

A grass widow is never as green as she pretends to be.

Some men have an inherent ability for making mistakes.

There are many rounds of failure in the ladder of success.

The man who lacks push is willing to take things as they come.

It's hard to keep up appearances and save money at the same time

Good people are supposed to be happy, but their looks often belie it

Had one of our suffragette's been in Mother Eve's place, what a fool she would have made of that snake!

It takes a woman to conceal the things she doesn't know, but a man's ignorance is always cropping out.

PEPPERS

The Horrors of War.

Of brave deeds upon the battlefield amid the thunder of cannon and the cries of the wounded, of heroes of the Victoria cross and great generals who rose from the ranks, the teacher told her class.

"Please, miss," cried one little girl, excitedly, "my father was in the Boer War!"

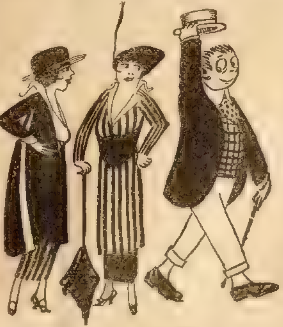
"And did he fight in any of the battles?" inquired the teacher.

"Oh, yes!" answered the little maid. "He was at Graspan, and Modder River, and Paardeberg, and ——"

"And was he wounded in any of them?" pursued the teacher. The little girl's countenance fell.

"No, miss, 'e wasn't wounded," she replied; then she brightened up. "But, please, miss, 'e 'ad a awful 'eadache!"

* * *



Ella—"I don't know that man from Adam."

Stella—"Oh, Adam must be older than that, by this time."

* * *

The Job Nurser.

Senator Lodge was talking in Boston about certain investigating committees.

"They are like the brook," he said, "they flow on forever. Some of them, in fact, remind me strongly of Si Hoskins.

"Si Hoskins got a job last spring at shooting muskrats, for muskrats overran the mill owner's dam.

"There, in the lovely spring weather, Si sat on the grassy bank, his gun on his knee, and finding him thus one morning, I said:

"'What are you doing, Si?'

"'I'm paid to shoot the muskrats, sir,' he answered. 'They're underminin' the dam.'

"'There goes one now,' said I. 'Shoot, man! Why don't you shoot?'

"Si puffed a tranquil cloud from his pipe and said:

"'Do you think I want to lose my job?'"

She Earned It.

In a certain home missionary movement every participant was to contribute one dollar that she had earned herself by hard work. The night of the collection of the dollars came, and various and droll were the stories of earning the money. One woman had shampooed hair, another had made doughnuts, another had secured newspaper subscriptions, and so on.

The chairman turned to a handsome woman in the front row.

"Now, madam, it is your turn," he said. "How did you earn your dollar?"

"I got it from my husband," she answered.

"Oh!" said he. "From your husband? There was no hard work about that."

The woman smiled faintly.

"You don't know my husband," she said.

* * *

No Kick Coming.

A typical "mover" of the ultra-shiftless type was passing a few days at a cowcamp in Arizona, preparatory to going into the desert on a prospecting trip. His wife, a tired-out, faded-out creature, complained to some of the cowhands of the hardness of her lot; and the foreman took it upon himself to remonstrate with the husband for his shiftlessness and his indifference to his wife's welfare.

"The old woman ain't got no kick comin'!" said the husband, when he had heard the foreman's remarks. "She ain't got no kick at all. Why, stranger, when we wuz fixin' to camp of a night many a time I've driv' the team half a mile out of the way so's wood and water would be handy fur the old woman to fetch!"

* * *

Minister Was Puzzled.

At a marriage service performed some time ago in a little country church in Georgia, when the minister said in a solemn tone, "Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband?" instead of the woman answering for herself, a gruff man's voice answered:

"I will."

The minister looked up very much perplexed, and paused. He repeated the sentence, and again the same gruff voice answered, "I will."

Again the minister looked up surprised, not knowing what to make of it, when one of the groomsmen at the end of the row said:

"She is deaf. I am answering for her."

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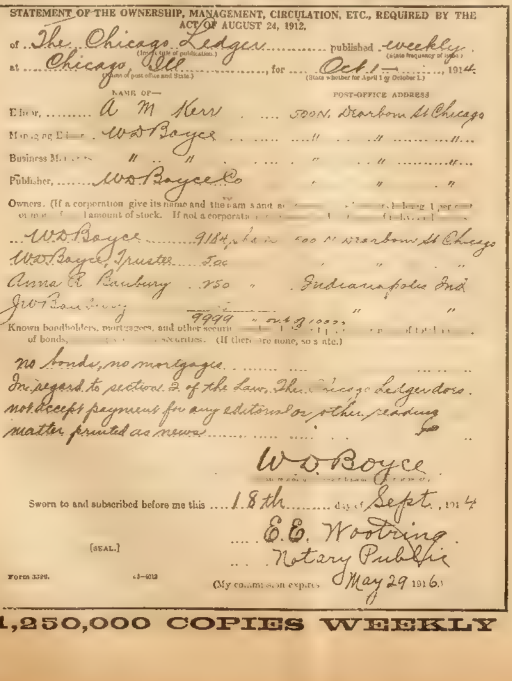

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of The Chicago Ledger (Insert title of publication.) published weekly (state frequency of issue.)

at Chicago, Ill (Name of post office and State.), for Oct 1, 1914. (State whether for April 1 or October 1.)

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Managing Editor, W D Boyce .... " " "

Business Managers " " .... " " "

Publisher, W D Boyce Co .... " " "

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Aeroplane Tom

Or, In the World-Wide War

By HUGH HAMILTON

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CHAPTER IV.

KING ALBERT'S LENIENCY.

IT WAS not long before the messenger, Rudolph, returned with a file of Belgian soldiers, and the young aviators were handed over to them. The boys saw themselves in the very shadow of death, and that after they had escaped the perils of the air during their flight from Leipsic to Liege.

They believed that if they could face the court-martial they would be able to establish their innocence, but the Belgians were so excited and enraged, that the very fact that our friends had come from Germany, coupled with the finding of the spy's papers in Tom's possession, was enough to seal their doom.

They were marched away, surrounded by a howling mob of citizens, and their escorts were more than once obliged to lower their bayonets in the swarthy faces to keep the crowd back.

"If we could only reach the King's ears," said Tom, in a low voice to his dejected companion, "we would be heard, and justice would follow."

"But they will not let us carry our case to King Albert, who is at the front," was the reply.

In front of the Palace of Justice stood a man arrayed in a brilliant uniform, dictating a dispatch to an orderly who stood by with uncovered head. The boys' guards halted at sight of his personage and looked at one another.

"It must be the King," exclaimed Tom.

The dispatch was finished in a minute, and the orderly saluted and darted away. The captain of the guard advanced and spoke to the distinguished-looking person, who in turn fixed his eyes on the young captives. There was a benign look in his deep, expressive eyes, and presently he came forward.

"It is true?" said he, in a rich voice. "Can it be that you young men are German spies?"

"We do not know whom we address," answered Tom.

"I am the King."

The hearts of the boys throbbed with hope.

"We are not German spies, your majesty. I am Tom Chester of America, and this is my friend, Basil Granson, a native of Switzerland. We came from Leipsic to meet my uncle, Herr Chester, the aviator, whom we expected to find in Liege. We were seized as soon as we alighted in the city and put in jail, but we managed to get out, and fell in with a man who was undoubtedly a German spy. We fell upon him in the act of making notes, and nearly held him, but he eluded us. A paper fell into my possession, a paper which I understand contains plans of the fortifications, and this document has been used against us."

"What has become of your aeroplane?" asked King Albert.

"We left it in the marketplace, and have not seen it since."

The Belgian monarch was silent for a moment.

"What did you see during your flight?" he asked, when he looked up again.

"We had an encounter with a Zeppelin, your majesty.

"What!" exclaimed the King. "Did you have the temerity to engage the aerial monster?"

"Sure," answered Tom, using an Americanism which amused the King. "We gave her the contents of our rapid-fire gun and crippled her, and she was afterward destroyed by an aeroplane."

"I have the honor of an acquaintance with Herr Chester," King Albert replied. "I cannot believe that his nephew would enter the lists against me."

"I never had an idea of doing so, your majesty."

"Good! I grant you the freedom of the city. Your aeroplane shall be restored to you, and from this moment you are immune from arrest by my soldiers."

Tom would have burst out into profuse thanks for this leniency, but the King turned suddenly on his heel and walked away.

The discomfited guards fell off and left the boys to pursue their way whither they pleased. The deliverance was so sudden that Tom and Basil hardly knew what to do.

"We will look for the Swiftwing," said the former, at last. "It may have fallen into bad hands, and——"

"And may be used against the royal gentleman who has just saved our lives."

They turned and hurried to the marketplace.

All this time under a full moon the armies were fighting for the mastery of the forts surrounding the city, and the roar was deafening.

"Messieurs," said a voice in French, which language was familiar to the boys, "you don't look like Germans."

Tom and Basil stopped and stared at the speaker, a giant butcher who stood at his stall, cleaver in hand.

"We are not Germans," replied Tom.

"Then come in and have a frankfurter," smiled the butcher. "I am Choisel, the butcher."

The interior of the stall was clean and inviting, and Tom and Basil went in. A husky Frenchwoman smiled upon them, and began to prepare a hot lunch, while she eyed them closely.

While the boys were enjoying the unexpected treat, they perceived a lot of strange faces at the open door. There was some loud language coupled with gesticulations, and Tom leaned over to Basil and whispered:

"I don't like the looks of those fellows. They certainly haven't heard of the King's leniency."

The next moment the butcher came forward and leaned over the table.

"You will have to leave, messieurs," said he. "The mob outside will not take my word about you."

"The mob?" echoed Tom, whose face went a little pale. "We have the King's protection——"

"They don't know it and besides, they are the human wolves of the city, scavengers all, who want blood, but who will not seek it on the battlefield."

The boys, menaced by this new danger, rose to their feet.

"We are unarmed," Tom said to the butcher. "It is impossible for us to defend ourselves against the scoundrels."

"Go out the back way," counseled the Frenchman. "I will hold them off till you are in the little street."

He went to the door and began to parley with the boisterous set.

"Come," said Tom, in fearsome tones, to his companion. "We must let our legs have an inning."

"But whither?"

"Back to the jail, I guess."

As they emerged into a small room, they were confronted by the butcher's wife, who held a revolver in each hand.

"Here, messieurs," said she, extending the weapons. "You may need such playthings as these. The wolves of Liege are fierce, but really cowards at heart."

The boys accepted the weapons, and the woman opened a narrow door, beyond which lay a dark street.

"Go, and may good luck attend you!" were her parting words, and the young aviators sprang away.

"Now for the jail!" cried Tom. "This is the first time I ever wanted to get behind the bars."

They took to the left and bounded through the gloom.

"They have scented us," Basil suddenly exclaimed, clutching Tom's arm, which he found despite the darkness. "Heaven knows whither this blind way leads."

There were discordant voices behind them, loud curses of maddened men, and a medley of footsteps. Suddenly something flashed above their heads.

Instantly there was a roar and a crash, and the boys were thrown off their feet. It was an aerial bomb which had been dropped by an aeroplane, and for a moment it seemed that the whole street had been destroyed.

Tom and Basil picked themselves up, and presently caught their breath.

"On! on!" shouted the American boy. "A miss is as good as a mile, Basil."

They resumed their flight, and at length debouched into a wider street, which was lighted and swarmed with soldiers. The bomb seemed to have paralyzed the whole lot.

"On to the jail," cried Tom. "Safety lies behind walls of stone for us."

"Halt!" rang out a commanding voice. "You are not Belgians."

The words tingled the boys' nerves, and they found themselves confronted by a dozen soldiers whose bayonets touched their breasts.

"Shoot the young spies," went up on every side.

"Down with the Germans!"

Tom and Basil set their teeth hard and backed resolutely against a wall. Rifles had been thrown to the shoulders of the mad soldiers, and there were eager fingers at the triggers.

"No mercy to the spies!" was heard in thrilling tones.

There would have been no mercy had not a young girl suddenly thrown herself between the leveled weapons and the doomed aviators. The boys looked and gasped. Merdi, the jailer's daughter, had come to their aid.

CHAPTER V.

A DANGEROUS MISSION.

THE striking beauty and demeanor of the young girl nonplused the infuriated soldiers. The bayonets were almost instantly lowered, and Tom and Basil stood free once more.

"You will come with me," said Merdi. "I think the jail is the better place for you at present," and she smiled bewitchingly.

Not long thereafter our aviators were once more behind the thick walls, and had plenty of time to reflect upon their indiscretion in quitting the place for perils of which they had not dreamed.

"I hope this is the last of our adventures," remarked the Swiss boy, jocularly.

"I am concerned as much about the airship as I am about myself," Tom replied. "Ten chances to one we shall never see the Swiftwing again. It has evidently fallen into the hands of the military authorities, and has been pressed into the Belgian service."

"Which will not be bad news for your uncle, I think."

"I fancy it will not, but how are we to get out of this tangle?"

There was no reply, for Basil was thoughtful and puzzled.

The next morning when Merdi brought them their breakfast, her countenance

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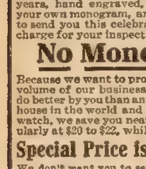

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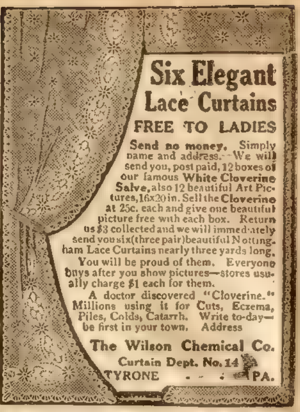

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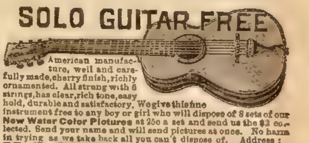

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was wreathed in the happiest of smiles.

"You have good news?" said Tom.

"Yes, the forts still hold out. The Germans have dashed against them in vain."

"What more?"

"Two airships were destroyed last night by our birdmen."

"Ah!" cried Tom, "if the Swiftwing had had a chance at them there might have been more."

"I have more news for you," continued the girl. "Your aeroplane has been found."

"Where?"

"In the Pontine Square."

"Is it damaged?"

"Not at all, I am glad to say."

"Good!" exclaimed both boys in unison.

"Do you want it?"

"I don't see how it would help us just now," was the reply.

"If you were at liberty you might use it."

"To fly to Paris?"

"No, to help the Belgians."

It was evident the girl was keeping something from them.

"You are to receive a visitor directly," she went on. "He will be here by the time you have finished your breakfast," and with this she took her departure, and the boys were once more alone.

They had scarcely finished their repast, which was wonderfully good, for their adventures had sharpened their appetites, when there were footfalls at the door, and an officer in uniform made his appearance.

"I am Colonel Calvay of the Belgian aviation corps," said he, introducing himself with a military salute. "I have heard of your surprising adventures in the air, and have come to tender you scoutship service in my department."

Tom started. "We did not come to Liege to take service under any banner," he answered.

"But King Albert needs you."

"Of course we are greatly indebted to your King, and I have been wondering how we could repay him."

"It is the easiest thing in the world. Our fleet of aeroplanes is not just what we require, and I am sure you could render efficient service with your airship, if you will."

"What say you, Basil?"

"I am ready for anything, since we have entered the war zone, Herr Tom," was the prompt rejoinder.

"Then we accept service under King Albert."

"A thousand thanks," bowed the officer. "You shall be released immediately," and he was gone.

"Here is a new pickle," Tom said, with a grimace. "We are in for Heaven knows what, but I cannot forget that King Albert saved our lives, and somehow or other we must pay the debt of gratitude."

The order of release followed fast upon Colonel Calvay's departure.

The young birdmen found the Swiftwing in excellent condition, with the exception that some hungry Belgian had made a raid on its larder and cleaned it out. They were looking it over when they were approached by an officer, who handed them a map of Liege and the surrounding region. The positions of the contending forces were accurately marked, and the map was so plain that a novice could easily comprehend it.

"You are to scout over the German army and see what is going on there," continued the Belgian. "Of course you will keep out of danger, for there are opposing airships afloat, and all are ready to cripple ours."

"Zeppelins, you mean?"

"Two, at least, are known to be in this vicinity; one is the Crown Princesse, which has given us a good deal of trouble on account of her insistence."

"Yes."

"She carries twenty-six men, all experienced bomb droppers."

"A formidable antagonist," commented Tom.

"That she is," said the officer. "We do not advise you to tackle this air monster, for the Swiftwing, as you call your aeroplane, is no match for her. You are to keep out of harm's way, but are to observe the position of the German army and report intelligently to me."

"We are ready for the trial."

An hour later those who stood around the Swiftwing saw her vault gracefully into the upper air with Tom in charge, and a cheer greeted the boys as they soared heavenward.

"It's ticklish business, eh, Basil?"

"I prefer the sheepfolds of Switzerland," was the reply.

"And I the soda fountains of America."

As the Swiftwing cleaved the clear air, the boys saw beneath them the camps of the opposing armies. The heavy fighting had lulled, and the smoke had lifted from the battlefield. Not an aerial foe was in sight, and Tom swept the ether with his glass eagerly looking for one. In a little while they were sailing over the German camp.

The sun gilding the steeples of old Liege presented a picture beyond the most glowing description. They saw the Meuse flowing like a river of silver between the forts which had been so gallantly defended, and the men below resembled pygmies as they rushed hither and thither like a hive of angry bees.

"Ah!" suddenly exclaimed Tom. "There is a dark speck yonder. Not one, but two, as I live!"

"Airships?" ejaculated Basil.

"What else can they be?"

He studied the objects for a minute longer, and then handed the glass to his companion.

"I make out one to be a Zeppelin, no doubt the Crown Princesse. We were not to have an encounter with that terrible aerial vulture, remember."

"Just as though I had forgotten," rejoined Tom. "We will fly to the left so as to be in a position to return, should she intend attacking us."

The specks on the horizon grew larger each moment, and presently Tom put down the glass.

"They have separated," said he. "If they intend to take us on each flank——"

"We are done for!" finished Basil, turning pale.

There are times when discretion is the better part of valor and the two aviators realized this when they saw the movements of the great airbirds.

Tom turned the Swiftwing's nozzle toward Liege, but did not take his eyes from the menacing danger. He saw that one of the aero eagles was a Zeppelin, and his thoughts went back to the one they had encountered during their flight from Leipsic. It was evident that the enemy was acting in concert in order to bear down upon them, and Tom felt his blood tingle in every vein.

"It's a race," said he, with a glance at the silent Basil.

"Put the Swiftwing to the greatest test," came the low reply.

"I certainly shall," and the aeroplane cut the air like an arrow, for every part of her was put to the supreme test.

The leading foe dipped and came on with the fury of a pursuing savage. Its mate, circling to the right, bore through the air with the same speed, and all at once something sped so close to the Swiftwing that Basil uttered a cry.

"They've got our range!" he exclaimed. "That was a shot from the big one."

"Take the helm," said Tom, whose face was drawn with determination. "We were told not to fight, but we have a right to defend ourselves."

He turned to the rapid-fire gun and adjusted it.

"She must come a little nearer," Basil heard him say. "If the little one doesn't ram us——"

"Here she is, Herr Tom!"

At that moment the smaller airship loomed up within a few rods of them. Tom stared aghast.

"He's got nerve," gasped Basil, and then before he could breathe again, the two airships collided, and with a crash the Swiftwing seemed to fold up and sink into the depths below.

CHAPTER VI.

PRISONERS.

THERE was little time for thought or action. The meeting of the aeroplanes had brought them so closely together that they had become entangled like warring eagles, and each, unable to extricate itself, was falling to the ground below. And this ground was within the German lines between Tongres and St. Strond.

Fortunately for the young aviators, they were not precipitated from the Swiftwing, else they would have plunged head downward to certain death. The entangling of the airships was breaking the descent, and as Tom and Basil clung wildly and with desperation to their perilous perch, they cast one look toward the Zeppelin, now a spectator of the thrilling scene.

Over and over went the airships, but straight to the earth, which seemed alive with armed men. The boys gave themselves up for lost.

In a few seconds the end came with startling suddenness; the German, being underneath, struck the ground, scattering a crowd of gaping soldiers, and the Swiftwing completed the accident on top of her.

There was a wild rush of men to the scene. The welded antagonists were jerked apart amid vociferous orders by the officers, and Tom and Basil were wrenched from the wreck.

There was little to do for the occupants in the German aeroplane, for both had been killed in the fall. The boys gazed at the wreck of their airship and then turned to their own condition.

"Are you much hurt?" asked Basil, who was the first to get his breath.

"A sprained leg for one thing," answered Tom.

"And I have a wrenched shoulder, as far as I can tell."

"Well, it's better than death," was the grim reply. "I guess we owe our existence to the dead men yonder."

By this time they were well surrounded by the enemy, and a German colonel was staring at them as if in doubt as to their identity.

"Who are you?" he asked, addressing Tom, who, hatless and dilapidated, presented a rather ludicrous appearance.

"I am an American, and my companion is Swiss."

"Belgian spies, eh?"

"We are not in the Emperor's employ," confessed Tom.

"That is easily seen," growled the Teuton. "I think we shall have doings with you."

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for prisoners they were, were escorted away under strong guard. A crowd of soldiers followed them.

"How did you come to grapple with our aeroplane?" queried the officer in command.

"She attacked us, sir," laconically responded Tom.

"And brought you down?"

"We wouldn't be here, sir, if we could have eluded her."

The officer smiled and beamed for a moment upon the boys.

In a few minutes they found themselves in the very heart of the German camp and in the presence of General Von Emmich, the commander. This old warrior put his glasses to his eyes and looked the youths over with apparent curiosity.

"Who sent you on your mission?" he inquired.

"Colonel Calvay, sir."

"You were to report our positions, were you not?"

"Such were our orders."

Tom saw that it was no use to use deception. They were prisoners of war, but at the same time were apt to be treated as spies. He believed that the best thing he could do was to put on a bold front.

"You have been in the city?" Von Emmich suddenly went on.

"Yes, sir."

"How is it provisioned?"

"It is amply supplied."

Von Emmich took off his glasses and deliberately wiped them.

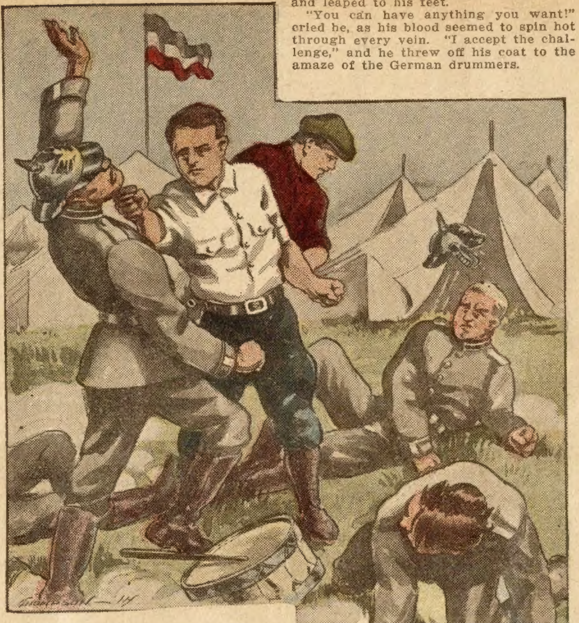
"Take them away," said he to an officer who awaited his commands.

"As prisoners of war?"

"Yes, until they can be tried."

The words sank like lead into the hearts of the daring young aviators.

They were thrown into a tent, about which a strong guard was placed, and left to themselves.



The fight became general.

"How do you like it, Basil?" queried Tom Chester, after taking in his companion's dejection for a moment.

"Don't joke with me, Herr Tom," was the reply. "I don't think this is a joking moment.

"Neither do I," Tom answered. "But since the milk has been spilled, I don't see any use in crying over it."

Basil's countenance lightened a little.

Presently the roar of battle was resumed. The Germans were again assaulting the Belgian forts. As the minutes passed the battle sounds increased. Now the tide of war seemed to roll toward the tent, and again it receded. Tom ventured to cut a slit in the heavy canvas and look out.

The wounded were being carried by, men were rushing away in great platoons, and the air was full of smoke and terror. It soon became evident that the Germans were falling back. Their lines were no longer straight, although shouting officers were endeavoring to keep them up.

"They're getting the worst of it," Tom said, coming back to the listening Basil.

"Who are?"

"The Germans."

"Then we may be rescued."

"I don't see much chance for that," Tom answered, doubtingly. "The Germans will not let us fall into the hands of our friends. Remember, they have not yet dealt with us."

Suddenly the flap of the tent was raised, and a bayonet was thrust into the boys' faces.

"Come," said a gruff voice, in German. "We are going away."

The young aeronauts sprang to their feet.

Outside the tent they found a file of infantrymen wearing the uniform of the Saxons. They were hustled into the middle of this guard, and commanded to march, which they did.

There were soldiers everywhere, some with their heads bandaged, others limping away, while some were lying prone on the ground exhausted. Overhead half a dozen airships were observing the battle, and the boys involuntarily wished themselves back in an uninjured Swiftwing and far from the scene.

They were halted at last and thrown into another tent. They were now in the rear of the German army, but still guarded as before.

The forenoon was waning, and the boys' hunger had not been satisfied.

"I hope they don't intend to starve us," growled Basil. "I wish some one would come with as good a frankfurter as we received from the French butcher and——"

He was interrupted by the appearance of a face at the entrance, and a platter was set before them. The boys fell to with zest, but the meal was not half concluded when a series of laughs startled them.

Four stout German drummer boys were gazing at them and making all manner of fun.

"Are the Belgian rats real hungry?" asked the leader of the quartette. "Did they go up into the air for a good meal?"

Tom's gorge instantly rose.

"How would you like to fight us?" continued the mirthmaker, patting his arm. "If you really want war, why not have a little of it right here?"

Tom threw aside the half-picked bone and leaped to his feet.

"You can have anything you want!" cried he, as his blood seemed to spin hot through every vein. "I accept the challenge," and he threw off his coat to the amaze of the German drummers.

"I am with you, Herr Tom," shouted Basil, performing the same operation, and the next moment the two boys stood erect like defiant young lions, their muscles standing out like whipcords and their eyes ablaze.

The four young Teutons were taken aback by this sudden display of belligerency, but they soon regained their courage.

"If you want to fight, come outside!" exclaimed the leader. "But I suppose fighting is not your forte. It is spying."

"You lie!"

The epithet spoken in snappy German drove redness into the faces of the young Teutons. They threw patience to the winds, and the foremost leaped at Tom with the impulsiveness of a tiger. Quick as he was, there was one quicker, and Tom landed on his jaw in a manner that sent him reeling back among his comrades.

The fight then became general, and though the young aviators were outmatched as to numbers, they dealt blows that could not be successfully met, and four badly whipped drummers walked off muttering threats of future vengeance.

This thrilling story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Liars.

"Will you please tell me," Scarborough asked his friend Mickleham, "which is the bigger liar—a man or a woman?

"I assure you that a woman is. When a man tells a lie and sees that it doesn't hit, he will sort of retract until he gets it within believable bounds. He watches his audience carefully to see whether the story is sticking or whether it is bouncing off, and if you can prove a man a liar he will own up and be done with it. There is no pleasure in lying unless you feel that you are getting away with it, as far as a man is concerned.

"But when a woman romances she believes it herself. She never looks to see whether it is being swallowed or not. Even if you prove that she is telling a fib she sticks to it, anyway. If you give out the impression that you have your doubts she will not retract, but make it worse.

"There's my niece who has been visiting us. She talks constantly about her husband's being handsome. She insists she thinks he is, anyway. We know she doesn't. No one could think that homely brute of a nephew of ours handsome. But you can't name a single man that she will admit is handsomer than her husband. We have all tried our best to locate one, but it can't be done. It makes us mad!"

"Well," answered Mickleham, "I will grant you that woman is a bigger liar than a man, but she is not the more artistic. A lie that doesn't get across at all is just a plain fizzle. It takes a man to get them over. Therefore, a man is really a liar; but a woman falls short of the title, for the counterfeit is detected, and such counterfeits do not deserve the title at all."

"A woman will prevaricate about anything to anybody," Scarborough resumed. "She will lie to herself and believe it. She is a wonder at that. She may doubt a man or another woman, but she will never doubt herself.

"For instance, there is that baby of my niece's. My niece says she thinks it is pretty. A 2-week-old baby! Great guns! She knows that little weazen-faced, wrinkly, ramshackle bundle isn't pretty! She swears that it is the living image of me! And still she says it's pretty! But, of course, it is more like its father than me."

"Wait a minute!" interrupted Mickleham. "If you had told me in the first place that the woman who inspired this discourse had a 2-week-old baby I would have stopped you long ago. What has such a woman to do with truth? What right have you to expect the truth under the circumstances?

"You're a great fellow to set yourself up as a critic of the sex. What do you expect, you old grouch? Didn't they name the baby for you? Is that what's irritating you?"

* * *

Poor Sympathy.

A Yorkshireman suffering from toothache went to a dentist to have the aching tooth out. The dentist pulled out the offending tooth, and was then asked to pull out the double tooth next to it.

"But that is a sound tooth," said the dentist. "The pain is only sympathetic."

"Yank it out, doctor. Hang such sympathy," replied the Tyke.

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A Wife's Tragedy.

(Continued from page five.)

shadowed from the train that day, I thought they must be on the lookout, and had mistaken you for me. Afterward, when we identified the manager, Trent, as your follower, I was sure of it. Even now I am uncertain which of us it is that Denzil Carisforth suspects, but that it is one of us, his conduct this afternoon is sufficient confirmation of, I think."

"It is quite an adventure," said Lance; "but I believe you are right. Can't we keep it up, Jack? I should love to lead them a dance on the wrong scent, and keep his attention from you!"

"Thanks! I may be very glad to do so," said Herrick. "But first the matter must be submitted to Mr. Carew, who has the most marvelous head for it all, I must say. He will be intensely interested to hear of our afternoon's experiences. In one way this move of Denzil Carisforth may help us; in the other, he will be better able to watch us. Now, Lance, you will understand my interest in the words you overheard that day when you were a prisoner in the arbor. And we can rightly guess that it was Trent, the manager, speaking to—Denzil Carisforth."

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this most interesting story. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

* * *

Remarkable.

The teacher had guests at school one afternoon and naturally was anxious for her pupils to make a good impression.

"William," she asked of a rosy-faced lad, "can you tell me who George Washington was?"

"Yes, ma'am," was the quick reply. "He was an American gen'ral."

"Quite right," replied the teacher. "And can you tell us what George Washington was remarkable for?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied the little boy. "He was remarkable because he was an American and told the truth."

* * *

Misunderstood.

A Massachusetts minister was making his first visit to Kentucky several years ago. He had to spend the night in a small mountain town where feuds and moonshine stills abounded. Engaging in conversation with one of the natives, he said:

"My friend, this is a very bibulous state I hear."

"Lord!" replied the man; "there hain't twenty-five Bibles in all Kentucky."

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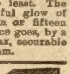

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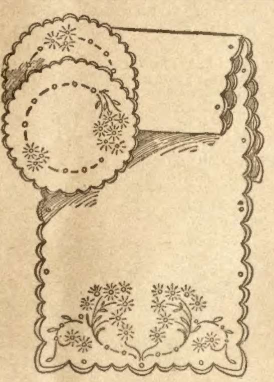

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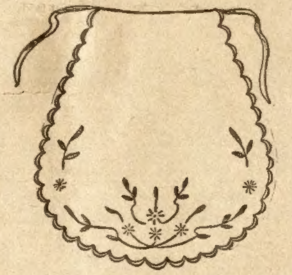

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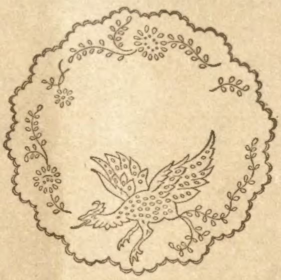

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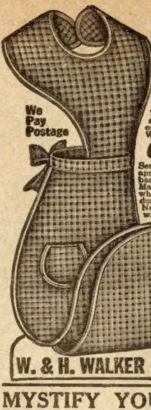
"Well," said Jones, "it's lovely once a year to come and look at a whole mass of cars that you don't have to dodge."



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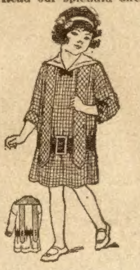
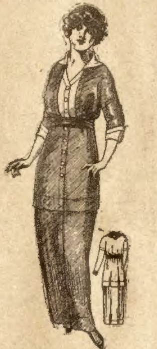
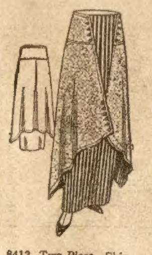


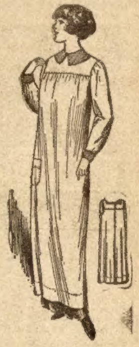
8415 Girl's Dress, 6 to 10 years.



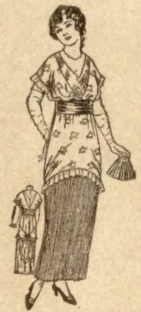
8306 Gown with Simulated Tunic, 34 to 42 bust.



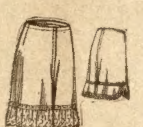
8412 Two-Piece Skirt with Long Tunic, 24 to 30 waist.



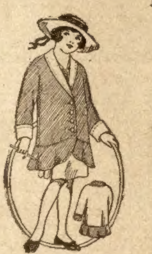
8316 Work or Studio Apron, Small 34 or 36, Medium 38 or 40, Large 42 or 44 bust.



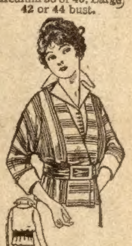
8410 Dress for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.



8322 Open Drawers, 24 to 32 waist.



8315 Girl's Loose Coat, 2 to 8 years.



8411 Fancy Blouse, 34 to 44 bust.

HOW TO GET THE FREE PATTERNS

Here is the way we will do it. To every one who will send us one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger we will send absolutely free five pattern coupons. Each coupon will be good for one pattern and you can select the patterns from those illustrated in any issue of the Chicago Ledger. When you see a pattern that you like all you have to do is to send us a coupon and it will be sent you at once. In this way you will have hundreds of patterns from which to pick the five that you will be entitled to, and you have all the time you need to pick out the ones you want.

These patterns are the best that can be made. Each pattern gives full directions for the cutting and making with information as to the amount of cloth required, etc., so that any one can make any of the designs illustrated with no trouble at all. At the same time, they are so stylish and accurately cut that dressmakers and seamstresses all over the country will be quick to take advantage of this liberal offer. Some will subscribe for two years so they can get ten coupons. These designs are made by the best designers and modists of New York and Paris, and are up-to-the-minute in fashion and beauty.

We treat old and new customers alike on this splendid offer. If you are already a subscriber, send in a dollar and we will send you the five pattern coupons and extend your subscription one year from the time it now expires.

To get these five coupons entitling you to five patterns, fill out the blank below and enclose it with one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger. Do this now—today! No woman should be without the Ledger's Pattern Coupon Book. Be among the thousands of women who will get these coupons.

.... CUT THIS OUT AND SEND TO US ....

THE CHICAGO LEDGER, 500 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

Enclosed please find one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger. This entitles me to Five Pattern Coupons. **Canada Subscription Price $1.50 per year.**

NAME ....
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or R. F. D. ....
Box............ Town..
This is a.......................... Subscription. State..........................
(New or Renewal)

If you wish any pattern from those advertised in this issue, mark the number and size on the margin and we will retain a coupon for each pattern we send you when we send you the Coupon Book. (Order by size and number.) **Coupons good for six months.**

We Beat Them All

$60 a Week Easy

How would you like to get such big money and more every week? Wouldn't it be great? Wouldn't you live swell—couldn't you have everything you ever wanted? Just think of it! $60 a week as easy as rolling off a log! You absolutely can't find a position like this anywhere else if you hunt forever. No, not even if you had a pull with everybody. It's a bigger cinch than any politician's. It's the biggest, grandest, most stupendous and absolutely sure money-making position ever offered. We say $60 a week because $60 is positively the least you should make in this position. But if you're as much of a live wire as most of our agents, you ought to double that amount easy. We don't care who you are—we don't care where you live or what you work at now, we prove with the most astounding and convincing evidence that we offer you the biggest-paying position open today.

No Money or Experience

You don't need a single dollar of capital—you don't need anything that we don't supply **free.** This is the house that treats its agents right—the house that supplies you with outfits that do the talking and selling for you—the house that gives you the most novel and remarkable lightning-selling helps ever gotten out. This is the house that supplies you with elegant sales-making presents to give your customers. We do all that and more—we do everything. There isn't a thing known within reason we won't do to make it easy for our agents to make big money. We show you how to sell nine out of every ten you call on. All you have to do is wear the nifty suit we give you free and show our magnificent samples and smashed prices and the sale is closed—your big profit is made. You don't have to be "smooth-tongued." You don't have to be educated. You don't need a big bunch of friends to sell Great Central made-to-measure garments. They sell themselves! You can do it—you can make $60 a week—as easy as our thousands of other agents. We don't care what you are doing now, you needn't give up your job right away. You can make big money on the side, in your spare time. Then when you see how easy it is to make big money, you can devote all your time to taking orders for Great Central Clothes and make more money than you ever thought possible.

SMASH Go Prices!

The tariff on woolens has been reduced—and, as always, we are "First in Everything." We pulled off a big trick this season that bewildered, dumbfounded and shamed other manufacturers. We got in ahead of them all with our stupendous orders for the classiest, most exclusive fabrics manufactured by foreign and domestic mills. Again we can undersell everybody $3 to $5 on Suits, Pants or Overcoats. Again we enable our agents to give competitors the laugh and walk away with the orders and profits. Talk about smashing prices! Everybody wonders how we do it!

"How Can You Do It?"

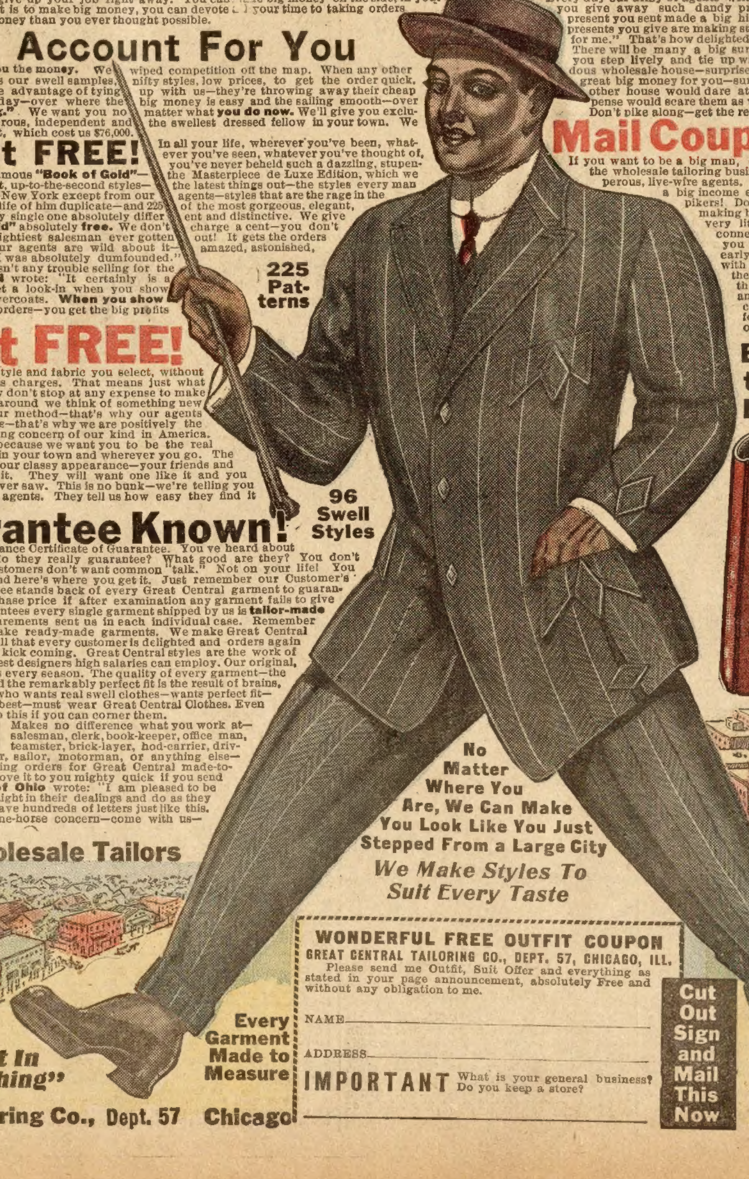
Every day our army of agents write us—"How can you give away such dandy presents?" "The present you sent made a big hit." "The grand presents you give are making steady customers for me." That's how delighted our agents are. There will be many a big surprise for you if you step lively and tie up with this tremendous wholesale house—surprises that will make great big money for you—surprises that no other house would dare attempt. The expense would scare them as white as a sheet. Don't pike along—get the real coin with us.

We Run An Account For You

We collect your profits for you and send you the money. We wiped competition off the map. When any other agent tries to butt in, our agent simply shows our swell samples, nifty styles, low prices, to get the order quick. The live wire agents are rapidly realizing the advantage of tying up with us—they're throwing away their cheap outfits and coming over with us day by day—over where the big money is easy and the sailing smooth—over with the house that's **"First in Everything."** We want you no matter what **you do now.** We'll give you exclusive territory—show you how to be prosperous, independent and the swellest dressed fellow in your town. We will send you our wholesale tailoring outfit, which cost us $76,000.

$76,000 Outfit FREE!

In all your life, wherever you've been, whatever you've seen, whatever you've thought of, you've never beheld such a dazzling, stupendous, magnificent sample display as our famous **"Book of Gold"**—the Masterpiece de Luxe Edition, which we give you free. Think of it! 96 of the niftiest, up-to-the-second styles—the latest things out—the styles every man wants but can't get outside of Chicago and New York except from our agents—styles that are the rage in the metropolis—styles no local tailor can for the life of him duplicate—and 225 of the most gorgeous, elegant, richest patterns you ever laid eyes on—every single one absolutely different and distinctive. We give you this glittering, mammoth **"Book of Gold"** absolutely **free.** We don't charge a cent—you don't make a deposit. It's the grandest and mightiest salesman ever gotten out! It gets the orders where "conversation" would fall down. Our agents are wild about it—amazed, astonished, delighted. **Fink of Arkansas** wrote: "I was absolutely dumfounded." **Martin of South Dakota** wrote: "There isn't any trouble selling for the Great Central." **Lawton of Mississippi** wrote: "It certainly is a corker." No other agent or dealer can get a look-in when you show our sample book of made-to-order suits or overcoats. **When you show up, other agents shut up!** You get the orders—you get the big profits—$60 a week and more.



225 Patterns

96 Swell Styles

Grand Suit FREE!

Made to your own measure from any style and fabric you select, without a cent cost to you. We even pay the express charges. That means just what it says—there's no bluff about it. We simply don't stop at any expense to make our agents successful. Every time we turn around we think of something new to help make big money for them. That's our method—that's why our agents are prosperous—that's why they stick with us—that's why we are positively the largest, strongest and best wholesale tailoring concern of our kind in America. We give you this swell suit or overcoat free because we want you to be the real thing—the fashion model—the style setter in your town and wherever you go. The minute you put it on everybody will notice your classy appearance—your friends and even strangers will ask you where you got it. They will want one like it and you take their order. It's the easiest thing you ever saw. This is no bunk—we're telling you the absolute truth—the experience of all our agents. They tell us how easy they find it and we tell you.

Surest Guarantee Known!

You ought to see our Customer's Assurance Certificate of Guarantee. You ve heard about and read about other guarantees, but what do they really guarantee? What good are they? You don't want "conversational" guarantees—your customers don't want common "talk." Not on your life! You want something **legal,** binding, iron-clad, and here's where you get it. Just remember our Customer's Assurance Certificate of Guarantee stands back of every Great Central garment to guarantee we positively refund purchase price if after examination any garment fails to give absolute satisfaction. It guarantees every single garment shipped by us is **tailor-made** especially to order from measurements sent us in each individual case. Remember that we absolutely do not make ready-made garments. We make Great Central garments so far superior to all that every customer is delighted and orders again—nobody ever has a single kick coming. Great Central styles are the work of versatile minds of the cleverest designers high salaries can employ. Our original, classy ideas cost us fortunes every season. The quality of every garment—the unexcelled workmanship and the remarkably perfect fit is the result of brains, ability and care. Any man who wants real swell clothes—wants perfect fit—wants every feature the best—must wear Great Central Clothes. Even competitors will own up to this if you can corner them.

You Can!

Makes no difference what you work at—salesman, clerk, book-keeper, office man, teamster, brick-layer, hod-carrier, driver, tradesman, waiter, farmer, sailor, motorman, or anything else—you can earn big money taking orders for Great Central made-to-measure clothes and we will prove it to you mighty quick if you send the coupon now. **Gannon of Ohio** wrote: "I am pleased to be working for a company so straight in their dealings and do as they advertise they will do." We have hundreds of letters just like this. Don't work any more for a one-horse concern—come with us—connect with

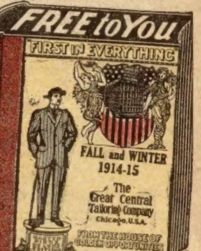
The Big Wholesale Tailors

"First In Everything"

Mail Coupon Quick

If you want to be a big man, come with the **big house** in the wholesale tailoring business. Join the successful, prosperous, live-wire agents. Tie up with the house that makes a big income easy. Don't stick around with pikers! Don't hang around a hopeless job, making big money for somebody else and very little for yourself. You'll have to connect with us sooner or later, so you better do it now and get in soft early. Come on with us—come on with the money-makers—come on with the house that treats you square—that enables you to make $60 and more a week. Send the coupon now—this very minute—for remarkable proof and gorgeous outfit **FREE!**

Be Sure to Get this Wonderful Big Free Book!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"FIRST IN EVERYTHING"
FALL and WINTER
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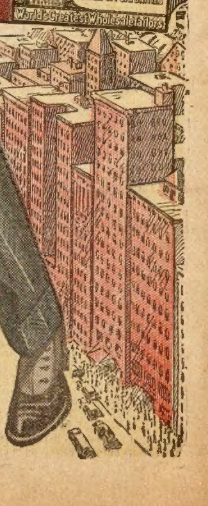
The Great Central Tailoring Company
Chicago, U.S.A.
FROM THE HOUSE OF GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES
World's Greatest Wholesale Tailors



No Matter Where You Are, We Can Make You Look Like You Just Stepped From a Large City

We Make Styles To Suit Every Taste

Every Garment Made to Measure

WONDERFUL FREE OUTFIT COUPON

GREAT CENTRAL TAILORING CO., DEPT. 57, CHICAGO, ILL.

Please send me Outfit, Suit Offer and everything as stated in your page announcement, absolutely Free and without any obligation to me.

NAME____________________________

ADDRESS____________________________

IMPORTANT What is your general business? Do you keep a store?

____

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